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The portion with the domed roof is a sheikh's tomb. On the wall to the right a modern world map is to be seen.

THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM

AN ARAB RELIGION IN
THE NON-ARAB WORLD

BY

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The Moslem World in Revolution

WITH PREFACE BY

PROFESSOR D. S. MARGOLIOUTH

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

PREFACE

BY PROFESSOR D. S. MARGOLIOUTH

THE scope of this work has been explained by Mr Cash in his opening chapter.

When the founder of Islam announced that it was his mission to make his system dominant "over all religion," he doubtless meant political dominance over the adherents of other systems, so long as such systems were allowed to exist. Twice in the subsequent history that programme came near realization: once when the hordes of the early Caliphs submerged vast portions of Asia, Africa and South-western Europe, and again after the close of the Middle Ages when the Ottomans, having established themselves at the Byzantine capital, penetrated far into Europe from the south-east. The condition of the world at the close of the nineteenth century presented a striking contrast to that programme. Extensive territories mainly peopled by Moslems had by then come under the control of European and nominally Christian powers; and in the first quarter of the twentieth century—mainly, though not entirely, owing to the fatuous participation of Turkey in the Great War and the subsequent revolution in the fragment of the Ottoman Empire which survived—the area controlled by independent Moslem governments was so reduced as to be politically almost inconsiderable.

Moslem countries had indeed frequently experienced a change of rulers; the instability of their dynasties was notorious. Such changes had meant little more than the substitution of new despots and tax-gatherers for old; at times they involved besides an alteration in the ritual

or the doctrine. The introduction of European control was far more momentous. It meant the substitution of order for chaos, the removal of religious disabilities, and the abolition of barbarous institutions; it familiarized the peoples with European science and its marvellous inventions; it was accompanied by the spread of education and journalism; it rendered the products of European speculation and literary genius accessible. Islamic pride, rightly emphasized by Mr Cash as characteristic of the system, had sustained a series of shocks.

The effects on Islamic thought and the movements which the new conditions have originated have been studied by Mr Cash in Islamic environment. He has been at pains to isolate the permanent elements of the system from the accretions due to the countries which have come under its sway. The modern movements would be unintelligible without the historical background which he has supplied to the extent required by his purpose. His work will be perused with profit by those who have given much time to the study of Islamic history and institutions, and may be confidently recommended to those English readers of newspapers who, having little time for such study, are yet conscious of some obligation towards the many millions of Moslems whom Great Britain controls or protects.

D. S. M.

EDITORIAL NOTE

THIS book is going to press during the absence of the author in the Near East. He is, therefore, unable to read proof.

It should be remembered that in the Moslem world events at times move rapidly, and that history continues to be made in the period that must necessarily elapse between the date when the manuscript leaves the author's hands and the publication of the book.

EDWARD SHILLITO

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF DATES

| ISLAM | | EUROPE AND ASIA | |
|---------|--|-----------------|---|
| A.D. | | A.D. | |
| 570-632 | Life time of Mohammed. | 590 | Gregory the Great sent missionaries to England. |
| 570 | Birth of Mohammed. | 597 | St Columba died. |
| 622 | Mohammed's flight from Mecca. | 590-628 | Persian-Byzantine Wars. Chosroes II of Persia captured Jerusalem, Antioch, Egypt, and advanced to Bosphorus (615). Heraclius of Constantinople defeated Persians at Nineveh in 627. |
| 623 | Battle of Bedr. | 628 | Arab traders reached Canton; sent by Mohammed with a message to emperor to embrace Islam. The first mosque in China built. |
| 628 | Mohammed sent letters to rulers of the earth. | | |
| 632 | Mohammed died. | | |
| | <i>N.B.</i> —While Europe and Asia were locked in costly wars, Mohammed, in Arabia, was rising, unnoticed, to power. | | |
| 632-661 | First Moslem expansion. Arab rule with the empire capital at Medina. The first four Caliphs. | 631 | Nestorian missionaries from Persia arrive in China at the court of Tai-Tsung. |
| | | 632-655 | Marks period of rapid spread of Christianity in England. |
| | | 632 | Conversion of East Angles. |
| | | 634 | Conversion of West Saxons. |
| | | By 654 | the Church established in nearly every English kingdom. |

N.B.—This first period of Moslem expansion east and west coincided with Christian missionary enterprise as far as China to the east and England to the west.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF DATES

xi

| ISLAM | | EUROPE AND ASIA | |
|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| A.D. | | A.D. | |
| 661-749 | The Omayyad Dynasty at Damascus. | 664 | Conference of Whitby and union of British and Roman branches of the Church in England. |
| | | 668 | Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, and reorganization of the Church in England. |
| | | 715 | Moslem empire extends from the Pyrenees to China. |
| | | 718 | Defeat of Moslems at Constantinople. |
| | | 732 | Defeat of Moslems at Pyrenees. |
| | | 749 | Beginning of break-up of the Moslem empire. |
| | | | The first Moslem period coincided with the expansion of Christianity through England, and this second period marks the missionary efforts of the English Church through Europe. |
| 749-1258 | The Abbaside Dynasty at Baghdad. | 755 | Martyrdom of Boniface in Germany. |
| | | 800 | Charlemagne, Emperor of the West, corresponds with Haroun al-Raschid. |
| | | 828 | Egbert, first King of England. |
| | | 852 | Boris, first Christian King of Bulgaria. |
| | | 865 | Rival caliphs. Rise of anarchical sects. Heresies in Islam. Separation of distant parts of empire from Baghdad rule. |
| | | 861-1258 | Twenty-seven caliphs. Increasing power of Turkish mercenaries. |
| | | 886 | Alfred in England. |
| | | 1013 | Canute, King of England. |
| | | 1066 | The Norman Conquest. |
| | | 1096 | First Crusade. |
| | | 1031-1075 | Rise of Seljuk Turks in Turkestan. |

| ISLAM | | EUROPE AND ASIA | |
|-----------|--|-----------------|--|
| A.D. | | A.D. | |
| 1683-1924 | From the defeat at Vienna to 1924, showing the decline of Turkey. | | |
| 1736 | Turkish war with Russia and capture of Crimea. | 1776 | American Declaration of Independence. |
| 1739 | Austria annexes Belgrade. | 1789 | Storming of the Bastille in Paris. |
| 1774 | Moldavia and Wallachia placed under Russian protection. | 1804 | Bonaparte, Emperor—End of the dream of a new "Holy Roman Empire." |
| 1829 | Greece gains her independence. | 1832 | Reform Bill in England and rise of democracy. |
| 1831 | Mohammed Ali of Egypt makes war on Turkey. Egypt semi-independent. | 1854 | Crimean War. England, France and Turkey allied against Russia. |
| 1879 | Serbia, Montenegro, and Rumania declared independent. | 1861 | American Civil War. |
| 1911 | Italy annexes Tripoli. | 1900 | The Boxer Rising in China. |
| 1913 | Balkan War—Turkey in Europe further reduced. | 1904-5 | Russo-Japanese War. |
| 1918 | Great War—Turkey loses Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Mesopotamia. | 1909 | M. Bleriot first to fly the English Channel in an aeroplane. |
| 1924 | Abolition of Caliphate and establishment of a Republic. | 1912 | China a Republic. |
| | The Moslem empire now reduced to Asia Minor and small strips of territory in Eastern Europe. | 1914-1918 | The Great War. Republicanism in Europe. Nationality movements in East. Mandate system established for ex-enemy territory. League of Nations. Bolshevist movement in Russia. |

This period, while showing decline in Moslem political power and the domination of the world by Europe, marks the limits of European expansion, as in Russo-Japanese War, and the rise of a new race-consciousness in the East.

CONTENTS

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|--|------|
| PREFACE BY PROFESSOR D. S. MARGOLIOUTH | vii |
| EDITORIAL NOTE | ix |
| COMPARATIVE TABLE OF DATES | x |
| I. ISLAM IN THE MODERN WORLD | 1 |
| II. THE MAN MOHAMMED | 11 |
| III. THE ORIGINS AND SOURCES OF MOHAMMED'S FAITH | 88 |
| IV. EMPIRE BUILDING IN ISLAM | 52 |
| V. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ISLAM | 77 |
| VI. MYSTICISM IN ISLAM | 97 |
| VII. ISLAM AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE | 122 |
| VIII. THE IMPACT OF WESTERNISM UPON OTTOMAN ISLAM | 146 |
| IX. ISLAM IN THE PAGAN WORLD | 165 |
| X. THE REVIVAL OF ARAB ISLAM | 189 |
| XI. ISLAM—A MISSIONARY RELIGION | 218 |

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|--|-----------------------|
| XII. RENAISSANCE IN THE MOSLEM WORLD . . . | 238 |
| XIII. ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY | 263 |
| APPENDIX | 293 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 297 |
| INDEX | 301 |
| MAP | <i>At end of book</i> |

THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM

CHAPTER I

ISLAM IN THE MODERN WORLD

THAT the Moslem world is, in our day, passing through most momentous changes none can doubt. In some lands, such as Turkey, these changes may be described as revolution, in others transition, and yet in others renaissance. These movements are like a mighty earthquake which first causes the ground to heave and move. Then loud rumbling noises are heard, as though some pent-up force is seeking to burst its way through the earth. Great fissures appear, and buildings rock and crash to the ground. So in the world of Islam the old orthodox ground of the faith has heaved and moved under the impelling force of western science. Great gaps are seen in the rock of Islam which once appeared to be impenetrable and immovable, and the ancient edifices of Moham-medanism such as the Caliphate have come crashing down. These changes are political, setting up democracy and nationalism in the place of the old sultanic autocratic rule. They are economic and intellectual, bringing the Moslem world into the main stream of world life. They are religious and social, leading to many reforms in Islamic law and custom. Barriers are breaking down, the old slogans of holy wars and pan-Islamic unity are dying away, and with a new demand for education and literature there is steadily growing a new mentality which is western in outlook and thought.

The difficulty to an English reader of studying events in

Cairo or Constantinople, Baghdad or Bombay, is that they are generally unrelated to the background of Moslem history ; and the setting of a Mohammedan movement is often lost for lack of an elementary knowledge of Islam, out of which these movements spring.

Thus, last year, Londoners were surprised on opening their morning papers to see in big headlines, "Shingled girls of Turkey—Cigarettes, Foxtrots and the Charleston—The vanishing harems—A Stamboul bazaar in the Thames." Underneath these striking announcements was written :

Twenty-five pretty shingled young women, for the most part members of the intelligentsia of modern Turkey, are seeing London to-day for the first time. They arrived yesterday in the Turkish steamer *Kara Deniz*, which at the instance of the Turkish Ministry of Commerce has been converted into a "floating exhibition" for a summer cruise in the principal ports of Europe.¹

If before this ship arrived the man in the street had been asked what his impressions of Turkey were, he would probably have described it as a place where pashas kept vast harems in which women were shut up all their lives and forbidden to go out, and where black eunuchs guarded the entrance to Turkish homes against all comers. What then must such a man think when he reads that a band of up-to-date, well-educated girls, living as free lives as any English girls, have come to England from Turkey on a trade expedition !

The western world was profoundly interested in the expulsion of the Caliph from Constantinople, and the setting up of a republic in the once famous centre of the despotic rule of the red Sultan. The Islamic world reverberated to the earthquake that broke in pieces the pan-Islamic league and placed nationality above religion. Turkey, the bruised and broken, shattered by a world war, defies the anathemas of religious *mufitis* and sheikhs in the

¹ *Daily Express*, 5th July 1926. .

East, and denounces the claims of Europe to interference in her destiny. Strange happenings these ! We rub our eyes and ask, "Is this Islam ?" The Islamic law has been replaced by a western code, polygamy is forbidden, and many other social reforms have been carried out. The religious Moslem endowments have been confiscated and a new educational system has been set up on modern lines. The dervishes in their quaint dress have been driven from their monasteries, and, wonder of wonders, these sons of mysticism are thrown upon a world in revolution and forbidden henceforth to wear their distinctive costume.

We pick up our newspaper again and read :

Everyone knows of course that one of the changes that Mustapha Kemal has introduced into Turkey is the substitution of the kalpak for the fez. Not content with this startling innovation, he has actually so gone counter to the instructions of the Koran as to have a statue made of himself.

The dervish dress and the fez, the veil and the harem are all gone, and the elected members of the Grand National Assembly appear after their election at Angora in top hats and tail-coats ! We may smile at these eccentricities, but they are symptoms of something. The world surely seems to have gone mad when a man can be condemned to death for no greater offence than that he was seen wearing a fez, yet this is what happened. What does it all mean ?

Mr J. A. Spender puzzled over this as he walked up and down the deck of a ship on which he was travelling. He says :

When the ship on which I came to Constantinople reached Brindisi she was awaited at the quayside by two lorries filled with small crates packed with men's hats. There were so many of them that when we had taken a certain number on board our captain waved his hands impatiently and said he would take no more. They had

been coming by every ship and every train for months, and the cry is always for more. For Kemal Pasha has decreed that no Turk from henceforth shall wear a fez.¹

The shades of Carlyle pass before us. What would *Sartor Resartus* not have given us had it been written to-day?

I turn over another sheaf of newspaper cuttings and pick out one which in bold type states :

IN TURKEY TO-DAY
TIME OF PROFOUND CHANGE
KEMAL'S POWER
THE WORSHIP OF A TYRANT

The article begins, "Turkey will never be the same again," and goes on to describe Mustapha Kemal Pasha as the one vital force in all these revolutionary changes. He is a "mighty soldier," loved and admired "as the great liberator of his land." The papers have been filled with Angora news, the Lausanne Conference, the new parliament, the attitude of Turkey to foreign powers and foreign trade, Mosul and the crisis in Iraq, Soviet intrigues in Turkey, the persecutions of Christian minorities, the sack of Smyrna, the fears of a Turkish-Italian war, the hanging of opposition members of the Grand National Assembly, Angora and the League of Nations, plots for a counter-revolution, and mixed with it all tales of Moslem feasts celebrated with dances, cinemas, and theatres, Turkish women demanding votes and claiming complete emancipation, and the Kurds rising in rebellion against the new "infidel," Kemal Pasha. Times have certainly changed since the word Ottoman was synonymous with the defence of Islam, and Turkey was regarded as the stronghold of the faith.

We leave Turkey on that most uncomfortable of railway journeys through Anatolia and Cilicia to Syria and Pales-

¹ Quoted in *Public Opinion*, 15th January 1926.

tine. Here we enter another world. Syria is dominated by France and Palestine by Britain, but we again meet the same symptoms of change and revolution. Syria is an armed camp. The Druses are in revolt. Damascus is shelled and parts of it are in ruins, while in Palestine an Arab-Jewish controversy breaks upon an otherwise peaceful land. Yet here too the same modern tendencies are at work. The West is pouring in with its aeroplanes, motors, and all other elements of the so-called civilized world.

We pass on to Egypt, and the note of nationalism meets us as we land. "Egypt for the Egyptians" is the slogan, and the country seethes with agitation. These lands are awake, stirred from an age-long slumber, roused to a frenzy against the West and its domination. With all the anti-western agitation, we find, paradoxical as it may sound, that the nationalists are as keen as others upon westernism. "Copy the enemy so that you may be strong enough to overthrow him" is the policy, and yet in the midst of it all stands majestic and proud the old Azhar University, with its rigid adherence to the Koran and loyalty to the Prophet. It is like trying to mix water and oil. Western impacts and Koranic traditions do not coalesce, and change is seen on every hand.

Events that arrest our attention are a rebellion in Egypt (1919) with complete independence as its objective; a strike in the Azhar University for a more modern type of education; the trial of Sheikh Ali Abdel-Razik for the publication of a book on Islam which the orthodox claim to be heretical; a feminist movement for compulsory education without distinction of sex, and for the prohibition of polygamy; and the promulgation of a religious decree by the Grand Mufti against the wearing of European hats, which are declared to be "against the Moslem religion." These are a few of the many Egyptian items of news that have within the past few years been discussed in the London press.

We cross over into Arabia, and again our curiosity is aroused by news that we read. The war in the Hedjaz, the triumph of the Wahhabis, and the holding of the first pan-Islamic Congress of Mecca are arresting indeed. The isolated religious reserve of Islam is being slowly drawn into the vortex of western life. Newspapers from Cairo penetrate into the most remote regions. European statesmen in their Near and Middle East policies have to make room for the fact of Ibn Saoud¹ and his fanatical followers. The Islamic world of India finds it important to send delegates to confer with this Arab chief upon the future of Islam, and new links are being forged daily with the outside world.

Iraq has been a vexed problem in England, and the press has given us the fullest possible information on the indirect rule of Britain through King Feisul. Few perhaps realize the significance to this Moslem stronghold of the new contacts thus being established with the West. A new day has dawned in Mesopotamia, and western influence is making itself felt everywhere.

This movement towards the West that we notice in so many lands is perhaps more significant in Persia than in other Moslem countries. The Shah is deposed and an ex-soldier has mounted the throne. Bolshevism is making a great bid for supremacy in this old home of the Shiah. Changes are taking place which a generation ago would have been scouted as utterly impossible. There are signs of a break-away from Islam as a system. The women in Persia, as in Turkey and Egypt, are beginning to make themselves felt in the politics of the land. Some of them regard Moslem law, as applied to women, as a badge of slavery. At the same time the orthodox are heading a movement with "Back to the Koran" as its slogan.

Meanwhile Indian Islam is striving to unite the scattered fragments of a dismembered Moslem body. Events in

¹ See Chapter XI for a full account of this Wahhabi king.

Turkey have roused India, and the Moslem press proclaims vociferously, "Islamic federation and brotherhood." Alongside of this the Englishman places the terrible accounts of Hindu-Moslem riots and the break-up of national unity through racial religious strife. The spread of western thought has intensified Moslem propaganda, and India dreams to-day of a new pan-Islamic league of nations. Moslem women leaders are thinking in terms of self-expression, women's suffrage, and emancipation.

Even a land like Afghanistan is not untouched by these waves of new thought, and there is a young Afghan party which seeks for progress on western lines.

As we review even in this bald way some of these changes in the world of Islam, the startling fact emerges that no single country is uninfluenced by this renaissance. Every part of the Moslem world is passing through a period of momentous changes. New life is taking the place of an indifferent lethargy. Western civilization is becoming increasingly an ideal in these lands, and with it goes a burning thirst for new knowledge on the one hand and democratic government on the other. Nationality is the universal cry. Islam has struck its tents and is on the march.

It was this phenomenon of a hitherto static Moslem world in the throes of change and revolution that led me to try to see present events in the light of Islamic history. I saw Islam, born in the desert, suddenly projected into the outside world. Every country conquered was influenced by the message of Islam, and in turn reacted upon this new faith, so that Mohammedanism assumed a variety of forms according to the contributions of differing types of thought and national ideals. All down the centuries since Mohammed's death there have been, broadly speaking, two voices in Islam—the one defending rigid, static, orthodox doctrine, the other pleading for a liberal, progressive, and modern faith. Every Moslem land shows traces of the conflict between those who sought to preserve

Islam in its primitive purity and those who aimed at adapting it to new conditions and environment.

These reflections took me back first of all to Arabia, the home of Islam, and there in the desert seemed an explanation for much that is cold and austere in the faith. Fanaticism is not necessarily an essential element in Islam, but it has often been a marked feature in Arab Islam. Thus one must distinguish between the Arab type, as represented to-day by the Wahhabis, and other types such as the Persian and Indian.

I tried to see what happened to this Arab faith as it took root in other lands. The chapters of this book are not written on any geographical plan of showing Islam in this or that country, but rather to select one country as illustration of each great movement. The book does not work its way chronologically down the centuries but seeks to give big sweeps of history in single chapters. We therefore start with the man Mohammed, and watch the rapid expansion of Islam east and west. We then turn to the influence of national cultures upon the faith and note the broad tolerance of the Abbasides in Baghdad, and the advance of learning in Spain. As we follow out this line of thought we get further and further from the Arab, who, however great he appears in history as a military enthusiast, was never a creative thinker. Islamic culture as seen in architecture, art, and literature was the contribution of other lands to Islam, and was not inspired by the desert.

Islam as it emerged from Arabia was deistic and very largely non-mystical, but in Persia it assumed the form of mysticism which, through the dervishes, has influenced the religion for all time. This new element, that was pantheistic in tendency, split Islam in twain, and the great schism of the Shiahs has made Islamic unity ever since an impossibility. This movement I have tried to trace out to the present day, when it finds expression in semi-Moslem cults such as Bahaism.

In Africa, pagan and illiterate, Islam, coming with a

clear-cut creed and philosophy of life, made great strides. Here I have sought to show whatever good there is that can be attributed to Islam in its impact upon savage peoples. That Islam has been influenced in turn by Paganism is without doubt. Animism in Islam is to-day a marked feature in Africa, and pagan rites and customs have passed into the practice of Mohammedanism.

These studies in Moslem growth, the action and reaction upon the faith in different lands, have a vital relationship to all that we are reading about Islam in the press to-day. Islam in the past attacked the then civilized world, represented by Persia in the East and by Latin and Byzantine Christianity in the West. It planted itself in many homes of ancient culture, and the processes that we notice down the centuries come to a climax in the world to-day through the linking together of all lands by the inventions and discoveries of science in the past hundred years. The western world is now pouring into the bottles of Islam the new wine of modern thought. The struggle for liberty of conscience and a liberal outlook upon life has never ceased in the Moslem world. To-day it is in its acutest stage, and as far as one can tell in this transition period the new thought is winning the day everywhere.

The world has shrunk in size since Mohammed preached his faith, and what were then isolated and separated lands are all to-day linked together in a world policy. Isolation has gone and no country now lives unto itself. Moslems slept while the rest of the world advanced, and Europe obtained a strangle-hold upon most Moslem lands. To-day through our own science and literature the youth of Islam is awake and alert, and the Moslem world is passing through a great crisis in its affairs. Islam, it is true, can never "be the same again." These lands will no longer bow to the despotic rule of Sultan or Caliph.

That Islam will emerge still Islam seems unquestionable, but what type it will be is quite uncertain. Modern Islam is adapting itself at present to a western idealism,

and in its efforts to become progressive it is absorbing all that the West can teach it. Yet on its political side it is more actuated by a dread of the West than by any constructive policy for the development of its own culture.

After surveying many changes in many lands we come back to the inscrutable Arab. Few Europeans have ever been able to fathom what goes on in the minds of these silent sons of the desert. The Arab is changed least of all peoples in this world of change. He lives but a stone's-throw from Europe, and yet his is a world apart, inseparably associated with "the land of thirst and terror." A police officer was met one day by an Arab who wrung his hand violently, his face wreathed in smiles, and jerked out excitedly, "Don't you remember me? You gave me five years' jail for theft—I've just come out to-day. By Allah! it is good to see you again."¹ An unexpected greeting certainly, and yet it is the unexpected that always happens in Arabia. Nothing was less likely in the seventh century than an Arab world-expansion and an Arab empire, but it happened. The Arabs are of Semitic stock, and the Semites have always surprised the world by their amazing vitality. They have influenced the world more than any other race. It is significant that to-day Arabia is becoming united again for the first time since the break-up of Moslem tribal confederation in the early days of Islam. Orthodox Islam under the strong leadership of Ibn Saoud is a force with which the outside world must reckon.

In the past it has always been at a time when Arabia counted least in world politics that she has startled the world by movements that have shaken civilization to its foundations. We have not heard the last of Arabia, nor of the man who founded the Moslem faith. But to understand this better we must turn back to the seventh century and look at Islam as Mohammed conceived it in his home in Mecca and Medina.

¹ *Bedouin Justice*, by Austin Kennett, p. 150.

CHAPTER II

THE MAN MOHAMMED

GOD is most great ! God is most great ! God is most great ! I bear witness that there is no other . . . save God. I bear witness that there is no other God save God. I bear witness that Mohammed is the Apostle of God. Hasten to divine worship. Hasten to divine worship. Hasten to permanent blessedness. God is most great ! God is most great ! There is no God save God.

Centuries before the days of wireless this trumpet-call was broadcast from Calcutta to Cairo and from Asia to Africa. With musical intonation this message, which summons the faithful to prayer, sounds out five times a day from thousands of mosques in every part of the Moslem world.

I was once the guest of a Mohammedan in the Near East. Several Moslem merchants were staying in the same house. In the early morning we were wakened by the call to prayer from a neighbouring minaret ; who could sleep again when over the stillness of the early dawn we heard a voice calling, "Come to prayer. Prayers are better than sleep !" We were sleeping on long divans arranged round the walls of a large room. The true believers rose, rubbed their eyes, and muttered, "Praise be to God. I witness that there is no God but God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God." Then turning to each other they said, "Peace be on you," and each responded, "On you be peace." Noticing that I was awake, the formula at once changed, and they all said to me, "May your day be happy." None prayed peace on me for I was an unbeliever, and there can be no peace outside

Islam. In a few minutes they made their way to a neighbouring mosque, where, standing up, they repeated, "I have purposed to offer up to God only this morning, with a sincere heart, my prayers."

As soon as worship was over we foregathered at our host's shop, and coffee having been ordered, the day's work began. Bargain and barter were inextricably mixed up with pious ejaculations and prayers. Traders swore by the Prophet that they were selling goods below cost price, and heated discussions were mixed up with appeals to the Almighty to witness that sheer ruin would face the merchant who sold at such prices. At midday the call from the minaret was sounded again, and suddenly everything ceased. Business half-finished was suspended and all moved off to the mosque. Throughout that day I sat there, listening to and talking with men whose religion was woven into the very fibre of their life. Their trade language was religious; their minds, while intent on business, never wandered from the supreme fact of God and of their absolute dependence upon Him. To them it was just as natural to speak about God as to bargain over the price of cloth. Life was all one—religious from start to finish: the social side was religiously social, and the business of the day was shot through with faith in Allah and His help to the true believer, enabling the Moslem to triumph in a bargain over the dogs of Christians. What then, we ask, was the source of such a religion?

Mohammed, an Arab of the Arabs, has stamped his personality and his faith upon millions of people. He still holds the undivided allegiance of people in every part of the globe. His laws are divine precepts to many races and widely separated peoples. His example, his teaching, and his ideals inspire men in every walk of life. No one but Jesus Christ holds the love and affection of so many people as does Mohammed. To over two hundred and thirty million people he is still the world's greatest man, the last and final Prophet, the hope of the world,

and the ideal for the human race.¹ Who, then, was Mohammed ?

About the year A.D. 622 we see Mohammed astride a white camel racing across the desert from Mecca to Medina. In Mecca he had declared himself a prophet ; trouble had followed, and now he is a fugitive fleeing for his life to Medina.

As the camel climbs to the top of a hill he is silhouetted against the sky. He is on a high point in an immense plateau, rocky and sandy, in what the Arabs call "the land of terror and thirst." A closer view shows the Prophet to be a man of medium height and a little over fifty years of age. He is dressed in flowing Arab robes. He has a prominent aquiline nose and a pair of flashing eyes that seem to pierce through those who approach him. There is nothing of the ascetic in his appearance. On the contrary he is a very human man, swayed by all the passions of human nature. He blazes out in wrath as he thinks of his persecutors, and yet he can be kind and gentle as a mother with her babe. His whole appearance gives the impression of strength and resolve. His sinewy figure is built to withstand fatigue and hardship, and as he flees from his persecutors in Mecca he has one fixed and determined resolve—to be recognized as the Prophet of God throughout Arabia. Legend tells us that he was offered anything he might choose, wealth or power, if only he would give up his claim to the prophetic office, but, scorning all, he turned his back on his birthplace and

¹ This may be open to challenge in view of the changes taking place in many Moslem lands, but the Mohammedan, deeply imbued with western thought, draws a sharp distinction between the Islamic system and code of law and the personality of the Prophet. He will openly criticize many things in Islam, but his love and loyalty to Mohammed are deep and unshaken.

This is why to-day Moslem scholars are seeking to disentangle the man Mohammed from the many traditions which surround the story of his life. The rallying-point in Islam now is the man. His personality dominates the situation, and the Islam of the future will stand or fall upon the character of the founder of the faith. For a fuller exposition of this theme the reader is referred to *The Ideal Prophet*, by Khwaja Kemal-ud-Din.

sought to establish his faith in the more congenial soil of Medina.

His life was ever simple and primitive. He never assumed the garb of an eastern potentate. He was always accessible to his followers. He loved children, and was known to pray with a sleeping child in his arms. His environment was Arabia, a land of perpetual raids and assassinations. The standard of conduct in social and moral affairs was that of the clan, and Mohammed accepted it. Hospitality was a sacred tradition of the land, and Mohammed said, "Honour the guest, even though he be an infidel." He lived surrounded by the desert, and its grandeur, isolation, and beauty left an indelible mark upon him.

"The desert," some one has said, "is God's handiwork unmarred by a single human element," and it was in this desert that Mohammed learned of the omnipotence and greatness of God. "God is great" is simply Mohammed giving echo to the voice of the desert. Immutability and strength are symbolized in the vast sandy wastes of Arabia, and Arabs have pitted all the strength and endurance of human nature against the desert, but it has remained unchanged and terrible.

The desert makes life a question of the survival of the fittest, for it devours the weak and only the strong can live. It thus shapes men into its own likeness.

It is not an unreasonable deduction that such an environment is responsible for much of the theology of Islam, and to a large degree for the conception of God which Mohammed gave to the world. A liberal writer in a Turkish newspaper wrote recently, "God said in the Koran, 'Verily we have sent down the Koran in the Arabic language so that you may understand it.' From these words it is evident that the Koran was addressed to the Arabs—the Turks can have no share in it. In the early days of superstition it was only natural that each

people should have a God of their own creation, and in that case it was to be expected that the revengeful Arab should have a mighty, revengeful God." Such modern Turkish writers see in Arabia and the Arab character the background and setting to Mohammed's life and teaching.

The Arab is of a proud, independent, and pugnacious nature, combined with great force of character and wonderful patience. His virtues are mainly due to the chivalry of the desert, and his vices are fostered by an environment which makes a man's creed "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." The lonely journeys across the desert develop a sense of personal freedom and independence. Jack is as good as his master, and an Arab scorns to use titles when addressing people. He will stalk into the presence of his prince or chief, and address him simply as Abdullah, or whatever his name may be. In such a land where life is stern and the desert relentless, all men are equal, and no caste or rank or class can exist where God appears so terribly omnipotent. They all breathe the same free air, roam the same free desert, and every man does that which is right in his own eyes; there is one person superior to him and one only: that is God.

A tribe is knit together by ties of kinship, mutual protection, and traditions. There is little inter-tribal unity; a tribe views its neighbours, Moslems though they are, as fair spoil for a raid. The attitude of one tribe to another is simply that of pirates. Mohammed sought in Islam to create a super-tribe, inclusive of all Arabia, knit together by new bonds of religion which would transcend any ties of kinship. Islam was conceived upon a tribal basis, and much in Mohammed's life finds explanation when one remembers that he shared with others the Arab ideas, morals, and ethics of his day.

There is no doubt that God was intensely real to Mohammed. His task in life was to serve Him, and his conception of God naturally governed his outlook. To Mohammed God was a super-Arab. His attributes are

those of an Arab with unlimited power. Dr Harrison has said, "Mohammedanism is little more than the Bedouin mind projected into the realm of religion."¹

Mohammed stood forth before the people to interpret what was after all sub-conscious in the Arab mind. His religion, while it contained many novel features and some originality, was nevertheless in its basic conception Semitic, and therefore latent in Arab character and personality. It was thoroughly Arab. It is a religion born in the desert, of the desert, with a desert conception of God, and with a desert outlook on life. Mohammed looked out on the world beyond Arabia in much the same way as he viewed other non-Moslem tribes around him. The world was fair spoil for his pirate army. This was why he divided the world into two parts—the House of Islam (the community of all true Moslems) and the House of War (the rest of the world). His injunction to extend the House of Islam in all parts was in essence exactly the same as the action of the sheikh of a tribe in sending out his raiders to subdue and pillage a neighbour.

On what standard then can we judge this man? The Traditions² of Islam, by their stories of myths and miracles, have given a wholly distorted picture of a great man. Modern Moslem thinkers indeed are coming to acknowledge this fact and freely to reject traditions where they contradict what are felt to be the essential characteristics of Mohammed. For example, Moslems in England pick

¹ *The Arabs at Home*, p. 42.

² *The Traditions*.—All Moslems believe that in addition to the revelation contained in the Koran the Prophet received an unwritten revelation enabling him to give authoritative declarations on religious questions. The Traditions are, therefore, supposed to be the uninspired record of inspired sayings. They form a record of what Mohammed ordered during his discussions and conversations with his followers. Mohammed gave strict injunctions about the transmission of these "sayings." Some forty thousand persons have been instrumental in handing them down, but Bukhari only acknowledges as reliable about two thousand of them. These traditions have been collected and edited by learned Moslem divines, and are used as a supplement to the Koran. Much of our information about Mohammed and Islam is due to this source.

and choose traditions at will in order to build up a new picture of Mohammed. If we compare Mohammed with other great leaders, such as Alexander, Xerxes, or Cæsar, we at once realize how much more permanent has been his work than that of most other world leaders. It is often asked, Was Mohammed sincere or deluded, deceived or deceiver? Such a question is not the right method of approach to the problem. The character of Mohammed the Arab, like that of most Arabs to-day, was a mixture of many fine traits of character and much that, judged by modern standards, was evil; sincerity and deceit were intermingled, and both were used to serve a common end.¹ Who can read the prayer of Mohammed and the religious purpose of the Koran without noticing a ring of sincerity? Ayesha, the favourite wife of Mohammed, gives the following prayer which the Prophet was fond of using:

Make me a fearer of Thee, and a great obeyer of Thee, and a great humbler of myself before Thee and a complainer and repenter to Thee. Accept my repentance and wash away my sins and approve my supplications; and make my tongue true; and show my heart the straight road and draw away the blackness of my heart. Make us satisfied with Thee. O Lord, pardon my faults, inconsiderate speaking and blundering, my wicked labours and intentions. O Lord, give me Thy friendship. Give us of Thy obedience that will bring us to Thy Paradise.²

There are many references in the Koran to the spiritual life: the need of prayer, forgiveness, and mercy. Mohammed had deep spiritual aspirations and high ideals, and he was undoubtedly a seeker after God.

To leave the picture thus would not be to give a true conception of an Arab, though it does help to emphasize one aspect of Arab character. Mohammed had many faults, and they were the common faults and failings of

¹ See *The Traditions of Islam*, by A. Guillaume, pp. 150-6.

² Quoted in *The International Review of Missions*, April 1926, p. 198.

his day. They were shared by his people as a whole, though at times he did succeed in shocking even the Arabs' sense of propriety, as, for example, when he married the divorced wife of his adopted son. This was contrary to all Arab tradition, but the Prophet did not allow this to stand in his way. His action was right, he declared; and though he caused no small scandal at the time, yet he silenced it by a divine revelation in which God is made to say, "When Zaid had settled the matter of her divorce, we did wed her to thee that it might not be a crime in the faithful to marry the wives of their adopted sons."¹

Anyone who reads C. M. Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, and compares his accounts of Arab raids and expeditions with the Traditions of Mohammed as given in the writings of Al Bukhari and Al Halabi, will at once see how strikingly alike they are. Mohammed must be judged relatively to the violence, indifference to bloodshed, and loot of the people among whom he lived. He was the best that seventh-century Arabia could produce, and as such there is much that we can admire and a good deal that we can condone as accounted for by the primitive environment of the man. In aggressive warfare Mohammed gave to his followers a strong lead. Moslem authorities give case after case where Mohammed attacked tribes and was the aggressor. The attack on the tribe of Khaybar is a good and authenticated example. Assassinations were carried out, much as they are to-day, but then they were at the instigation of Mohammed himself, and were an easy way of removing suspected people. Mohammed having begun on this path, found it impossible to draw back, and one thing led to another. In inter-tribal wars the Arabs, by general agreement, always spared the date palms, but Mohammed in his attack on the Bani Nadir had the date palms burned or cut down. The authority for this is Ibn Ishaq, the oldest biographer of Mohammed, and a Moslem. The treatment of women in warfare has

¹ Koran, chap. 33, v. 37.

been the subject of much adverse criticism of Mohammed ; and there is no doubt, if Moslem authorities are to be relied on, that he sanctioned and took part in atrocities very similar to those reported from Armenia in recent times.¹ Turkey, in fact, has simply copied what Mohammed and his followers did. He laid down the rule that the capture of women in battle did *ipso facto* dissolve previous heathen marriages.

The times were certainly barbarous and cruel, for Moslem tradition tells of the slaughter of prisoners of war in cold blood, the torture of captives to make them reveal the secret of their hidden treasures, and the slaying of men travelling to Medina under safe-conduct. These and many other similar things could be related from Mohammedan sources, and again let us say that, though these incidents do not represent the whole picture, they do form an essential part of it, and no character sketch of the Prophet would be complete that either ignored or withheld such charges. Judged by our present-day standards they are horrible in their cruelty and treachery, but according to Arab law of the seventh century they do not represent anything very extraordinary. It is difficult for the average British reader to understand that a man could have deep spiritual aspirations, noble ideals, and high resolves, and yet be cruel, treacherous, and relentless. The two seemingly contradictory characteristics are not, however, incompatible in Arab character.

The same curious mixture appears when we examine Mohammed's legislature. According to the Koran, theft is to be punished by mutilation of the criminal. Christian minorities are treated as outlaws, and the apostate from Islam is sentenced to death. The same book speaks of the mercy of God, and calls men to brotherhood, worship, and prayer. The only explanation that meets the difficulty is that we are dealing with a seventh-century Arab who displayed all the traits of a barbarous time, and yet

¹ See Appendix.

was a genuine seeker after God. Much is explained by what he believed to be God's attitude to Moslems and His very different attitude towards the rest of the world. When Mohammed was asked about the friendship that often existed between Moslems and Jews or Christians, the following oracle was given which throws a flood of light on the Mohammedan attitude to the world outside Islam :

O ye who believe, take not the Jews or the Christians for your friends. They are the friends of each other : but whoso amongst you take them for friends, verily he is of them, and verily God guides not an unjust people.¹

Apologists for Islam put forward this man, not as an Arab seventh-century ideal, but as the perfect pattern for the whole human race to-day, and here we must take issue with our Moslem friends. Moslems are fond of the form of propaganda that attacks the person of Jesus Christ and exalts Mohammed. I once sat with a number of Moslem sheikhs. We discussed freely Mohammed's demands upon life, his standards, his legislation, adapted to the weaknesses of human nature, and his spiritual claims on men. I drew out a copy of the New Testament and began to read the Sermon on the Mount. This, I said, is what Christ taught. The sheikhs listened respectfully, and when I had finished, one of them exclaimed, "Thank God, I am not a Christian." He felt that the standard was too high and altogether impossible. Moslems have often used the argument that Islam is better suited to the needs of a practical world than is the idealism of Jesus Christ. If expediency is the standard of moral and spiritual progress in the world, this may be so ; but after reading Mohammedan authorities it is difficult to see where the standards of Islam really help humanity. They allow wide scope for the free indulgence of passions, and little ideal of self-restraint appears. Anger, violence, and lust are allowed free rein, and the nobler qualities, such as

¹ Koran, chap. 5, v. 27.

forgiveness of one's enemies, are non-existent. This complex character was certainly above the men of his time in many things, yet in other respects he was most certainly on their level. In seeking to compare him with Jesus Christ one is perplexed to find any common ground at all. Between this Arab reformer-general, with his military genius and his spiritual longings, and the Saviour of the world, with His self-sacrifice, service for others, humility, and love, there is a great gulf that makes comparison an impossibility.

A study of the life of Mohammed and of the Koran shows that with accession to power there was a marked moral deterioration in his character. This is becoming apparent to educated Moslems, who in some cases are actually advocating the elimination of the chapters of the Koran written in Medina.

The arrangement of the chapters of the Koran is not in any sense chronological, so that if a person reads the book straight through he gets a confused idea of Mohammed and Islam. Fortunately each chapter is marked as given either in Mecca or Medina, and we are thus afforded one historical line which helps us to see Mohammed in the two great periods into which his life divides.

If the reader will take, say, Rodwell's translation of the Koran and study the chapters as they are there given chronologically, he will at once see the unfolding of the Prophet's mind—from that of a moral teacher and reformer who attacked the idolatry of Mecca to that of the warrior chief who sought to subdue a country. In the early days of Islam the poetic nature of Mohammed comes out, and his utterances are mainly denunciations of evil and threats of divine punishment. These were the days of persecution, and Mohammed encouraged his followers thus: "The Lord hath not forsaken thee." Believers are exhorted to trust God, who carries their burden. But troubles also call forth another note in the Prophet; and of a leading chief in Mecca who led the opposition to the

new faith, God is made to say : " I will lay grievous woes upon him, for he plotted and planned. May he be cursed." Such imprecations are fairly common. They have a Semitic ring about them that reminds one of certain of the Psalms.

The Meccans demanded to see signs and miracles as proof of Mohammed's claim. The only miracle that he ever claimed to perform, however, was the giving of the Koran itself.¹ There is also the verse which speaks of the splitting of the moon into two, and legend has woven around it fantastic tales that Mohammed himself would be the first to disown were he here to-day. The early chapters have blissful pictures of a material heaven and lurid accounts of hell. Whether these were meant to be taken as allegory is uncertain. Moslems then took them literally ; to-day, while the Mohammedan populace receive these descriptions of heaven and hell as literal, modernist Islamic writers are very clear in their statements that they were meant to be regarded as spiritual allegories.

Mohammed's boldest stand was taken in his denunciation of idolatry, and here we see the true reformer standing

¹ While the Prophet does not appear anywhere in the Koran to have claimed the power of working miracles, yet at times he gave evidence of a belief in divine manifestations. When asked why he did not work miracles, he said, " Signs are in the power of God alone, and I am only a plain-spoken warner " (Koran, chap. 29, v. 49).

Moslems believe that on four occasions at least God gave signs as His seal of Mohammed's prophetic office :

1. " The splitting of the moon in twain " (Koran, chap. 54, v. 1-2).
This many regard as a sign of the last day and a prophecy of a future event, not a past act.
2. The help given to the Moslems in the battle of Bedr. " Your Lord aideth you with three thousand angels sent down from on high " (Koran, chap. 3, v. 120).
3. The celebrated night journey. " We declare the Glory of Him who transported His servant by night " [from Mecca to Jerusalem] (Koran, chap. 17, v. 1).
4. The Koran itself is the great miracle of Mohammed. " It is a clear sign in the hearts of those whom the knowledge hath reached " (Koran, chap. 29, v. 48).

before a hostile people, exposing the falseness of idols and idol-worship and calling the Arabs back to faith in the one true God. In this he fortifies himself from the writings and example of Old Testament characters. He gets a little mixed in relating Bible history, and confuses Miriam, the sister of Moses, with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. He seems to have imagined that they were the same person. He recalls the trials of Moses, Noah, Lot, and other men, always leading up to the point that he is the last of a long line of prophets. Out of this there is developed another idea. Mohammed is not founding a new religion—he is the last prophet of the one and only divine religion that the world has ever seen. From Adam onwards all the prophets were pointing to Islam: “Before the Koran was the Book of Moses, a rule and a mercy, and this book [the Koran] confirmeth it.”¹ This placed Mohammed in the difficulty of having to explain claims that he put forth which contradicted the Old and New Testaments. His answer was simply that previous Scriptures had become corrupted, and the Koran was given by God as the true guide, and superseded them.²

At Mecca Mohammed was very much “A voice crying in the wilderness.” He believed that he had a God-imposed task, and he meant to fulfil it in spite of bitter opposition, slander, abuse, and persecution. Up to this point we have the picture of a reformer and spiritual leader. His teaching is a call to repentance, because God is omnipotent and one. A few precepts are fixed, but Islam as a system is still in a fluid state. The turning-point comes in the flight to Medina; the change in Mohammed’s fortunes meant a complete change in the development of Islam. New and hitherto unknown characteristics appear. The sudden change from being a persecuted fugitive to become the acknowledged leader of a small though growing community altered Mohammed’s

¹ Koran, chap. 46, v. 11.

² See *Mohammed and Islam*, by J. Goldziher, pp. 94-5.

whole life. The Medina chapters of the Koran bring this out with unmistakable clearness. We now lose the missionary aiming to win converts, and we see a legislator and warrior dictating obedience to his people. The sword takes to a large extent the place of the pen, and Arabia is warned that "Whoso obeyeth the Apostle obeyeth God." The Koran thus reveals to us a man who began his career as an earnest seeker after truth, and who, by the acquisition of power, used his religious impulses for self-aggrandisement. In true Arab style he resorted to intrigue in order to please, cajole, and conciliate the conflicting elements in Medina. The Jews were powerful in Medina, and every effort was made to win them. When this failed, they were denounced as hypocrites, threatened with the fires of hell, and ultimately exterminated or driven out.

The refugees at first found it very difficult to earn a living, and necessity probably drove Mohammed to seek new supplies by an attempt to loot a rich Meccan caravan. Whatever the motive may have been, this event marked a turning-point in the fortunes of Islam. The preacher, calling to repentance, becomes a man of blood, an Arab pirate, who by repeated successes finds himself at the head of a powerful army. This change was so remarkable that it called for a special revelation, and in the Koran, chap. 22, v. 40-41, we read :

A sanction is given to those who, because they have suffered outrages, have taken up arms.

This had obvious reference to the persecutions at Mecca. As an open conflict with Mecca became inevitable, further revelations appear, such as "Fight for the cause of God" (chap. 2, v. 245).

This was the first call to a *jihad* (holy war). Mohammed by this time saw clearly the value of one faith for Arabia, and fighting was to be the method of gaining the supremacy for Islam. From the same chapter we quote the following : "Fight, therefore, against them until there be no more

civil discord, and the only worship be that of God" (verse 189).

This marks a further stage in the new policy. The true faith is not only to be defended by the sword but established by it until all have become Moslem.¹

The battle of Bedr was the first real application of the new law. Its success established in the minds of the Arabs the truth of Mohammed's claim. Those who doubted were willing enough to accept what was asserted when they shared in the booty and loot. As raid followed raid, the poor refugees became wealthy. It was a lucrative form of sport, and it was typically Arab. No wonder, therefore, that with each raid there was gained a fresh accession of strength, both to the cause of Islam and to the army of freebooters who were looting and despoiling their neighbours in the name of God.

With success, Mohammed's vision expanded, and he began to look out upon the world beyond Arabia. Missionaries were sent to Egypt and Persia, and Mohammed published his programme of world conquest.

The following is an extract from a letter sent to Egypt :

In the name of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate. From the Apostle of Allah to the Chief of the Copts. Peace be on him who follows the guidance. I summon thee with the appeal of Islam, become a Moslem and thou shalt be safe. If thou decline, then on thee is the guilt of the Copts.²

It is uncertain how many of such letters he wrote, but there is little doubt that Heraclius, the Emperor of Constantinople, received one, probably when he was in Emesa, and another was despatched to the Persian king. Other messengers set out to the still pagan tribes of Arabia, and Mohammed had embarked upon a policy of world dominion. He was the head of a comparatively strong army. Reform

¹ See *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 175, by S. W. Koelle.

² Quoted in Margoliouth's *Mohammed*, p. 365.

was now by law and coercion, and not as in the Mecca days by an appeal to conscience. Having acquired power, he cast aside the earlier methods of conciliation and openly preached a sacred war in which God, it was claimed, would fight for Islam. However noble was the conception of a world faith which should recognize only one God, we cannot lose sight of the doctrine of "holy war" as an avowed means to this end. Political power became more and more the dominating aim, with war as the means of attaining to it. In earlier days Mohammed had said: "Let there be no compulsion in religion." This still much-quoted verse lost its meaning as the victorious general was able to enforce his faith by strength of arms and law.¹

When tottering to his grave, the aged Prophet left as his last legacy to Islam² the policy of universal war.

In all fairness, a student of Islam should compare the picture of an Arab army, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, spreading the faith to the cry from violated homes, burning cities, and ruined lands, with the message of Jesus Christ to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." "Go ye and preach the Gospel, heal the sick," etc. Mr H. G. Wells writes:

Because he too [Mohammed] founded a great religion, there are those who write of this evidently lustful and

¹ Contradictions in the Koran are accounted for by the doctrine of abrogation. If a later revelation is contrary to an early one the early one is cancelled and the later one is binding on the Moslem. Thus originally Moslems turned to Jerusalem in prayer (see Koran, chap. 2, v. 115), and later on, when Mohammed became established, the order came for those in prayer to face toward Mecca (Koran, chap. 2, v. 145). In the same way Mohammed in Mecca said "Let there be no compulsion in Islam," but later on he ordered the *jihād* (see the Koran, chap. 4, v. 89; 9, 5; 7, 67; 9, 92).

² Islam is the word used by Moslems themselves for their religion. It means resignation to the will of God. Mohammed's explanation was that it meant obedience to the five duties of the faith: (1) recitation of the creed, (2) daily prayers, (3) alms, (4) the fast in Ramadan, (5) pilgrimage to Mecca. The word Moslem or Muslim is derived from it, and means those who are surrendered. Mohammedanism is the western term for Islam.

rather shifty leader as though he were a man to put beside Jesus of Nazareth, or Gautama, or Mani. But it is surely manifest that he was a being of commoner clay; he was vain, egotistical, tyrannous, and a self-deceiver; and it would throw all our history out of proportion if, out of an insincere deference to the possible Moslem reader, we were to present him in any other light.¹

While, as we have said, it would be unreasonable to judge Mohammed by twentieth-century standards, yet it would be equally unfair to make him responsible for all the harsher interpretations put by orthodox Moslems upon his sayings. He was not only ahead of his contemporaries, but he was also a bigger man than his successors. The social horizon of the Arabs stops short at the tribe, and outside the tribe he has no neighbour and therefore no social obligations. Mohammed succeeded in making Islam a united family, and a new and wider sense of clan-ship grew up. But since his day the old tribes have reasserted themselves, and the much-boasted Moslem solidarity has seldom been little more than a beautiful theory. Tribes have raided tribes as in earlier days, and Moslems have fought Moslems in every age since the Prophet's death down to the Great War of 1914-1918. The spirit of toleration advocated at times by Mohammed has been lost sight of by his successors, and Islamic history has been marked by an intolerance seldom seen elsewhere in the world. "Abjure or die," "Abjure or be slaves," was the demand that confronted any conquered people. The interpreters of the Koran, by their intolerance and narrow outlook, have killed any possible germ of progress in Islam. Institutions as well as laws have come to be regarded as immutable, and thus individuals and nations have been moulded into a common pattern of dull uniformity.

Mohammedan writers of to-day tell us that Mohammed sought the emancipation of women and gave a loftier ideal of womanhood than any previous prophet. The fact

¹ *Outlines of History*, p. 324.

that he had eleven lawful wives himself and yet limited his followers to four is ingeniously explained thus :

He [Mohammed] was compelled to wage war against his enemies, which thinned the ranks of his friends, who gave their lives for him, leaving behind widows, who surely needed shelter and protection. Then it was that the law of polygamy was promulgated, to meet this necessity.¹

This is a fair specimen of the new colour given to the character of Mohammed by modern writers. Mohammed and his followers practised polygamy long before this necessity (if necessity it was) arose. He himself married, at the age of fifty-three, Ayesha, a little girl of ten. He certainly married Juwairiah, a widow, but she was the widow of the chief of the Beni Mustalik, who fought against Mohammed and was slain in battle, and the beautiful widow was taken by Mohammed as part of his share of the spoils of war. It was a strange way of providing "shelter and protection" for a sorrowing widow whose husband had just been slain in one of the Prophet's raids ! Uriah the Hittite was treated in much the same way by David ; but the Bible does not condone his action, it condemns it. Moslem writers to-day seek to whitewash the Prophet, but the lustful side of his character is typical of the man and cannot be explained away in this manner. The pretty Zeinab was divorced by her husband because he discovered Mohammed coveted her, and she immediately became a wife of the Prophet. Safiyah's husband was cruelly put to death by Mohammed, who promptly added her too to his harem.

In addition to these he had his concubines, such as Mary, the Christian slave girl from Egypt, and Rihanah, a Jewess, whose husband perished in a massacre of Jews by Mohammed.²

When evil customs connected with marriage and

¹ *The Ideal Prophet*, Khwaja Kemal-ud-Din, p. 147.

² See *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Appendix I, "Mohammed's wives and concubines," p. 486, by S. W. Koelle.

divorce are quoted from Moslem lands the usual reply is that these are not Islamic but are customs which form no part of the faith. This is in many cases probably quite true, but example has ever proved stronger than precept, and the Prophet cannot be exonerated from all blame for the backward state of womanhood in most Moslem countries. His example has been copied by his faithful followers, and by the practice of polygamy woman has been made the chattel of man. In Afghanistan recently there occurred an incident that must have opened many people's eyes to Moslem custom in a country under Islamic law. An Afghan merchant married a young Berlin lady and they went to live in Kabul. The husband died, and the wife, to her horror, found that she was part of his brother's inheritance. He offered to marry her, and was indignantly refused by the widow. She was, by Afridi law, the property of her husband, and his heir put her up for sale in the open slave market. "In order to rescue her from the fate of being sold to the highest bidder the German Minister purchased her, paying the very high price demanded for her." ¹

A very remarkable speech on the status of Moslem women was delivered by Mrs R. S. Hussein at the Bengal Women's Educational Conference. Mrs Hussein spoke of the "utter neglect, indifference, and ungenerous behaviour of Mohammedans to their womenfolk." She compared the purdah system to a deadly carbonic gas, and added: "Our sisters within the purdah are slowly dying a painless death due to purdah gas." Moslems to-day make much of the fact that Mohammed abolished the killing of female infants, but this is what Mrs Hussein says of it: "Though Islam has been able to put a stop to the physical killing of their daughters, yet the Mussalmans, even up to this day, have been killing the mind, the brain, and the intelligence of their womenfolk without any scruple." ²

¹ Quoted from the *Morning Post*, 14th January 1927.

² Quoted in the *Statesman*, Calcutta, 21st April 1927.

To this indictment of Mohammed must be added the fact that in Islam there have always been two standards of conduct—one for Moslems in their relationship to fellow-believers, and another for them in their dealings with non-Moslem people. The division of the world into believers and infidels is the governing principle of all Moslem life. In legislation the believer enjoys special privileges. In oaths a Moslem's word or promise is not binding to an infidel. The political and the spiritual are so intermingled that it is impossible to say where the one ends and the other begins. The civic law is the same as the religious law. God is the legislator, and a theocratic form of government with an autocratic vicegerent on earth was Mohammed's ideal for world politics. It might have worked more equably had the whole world embraced Islam. As it is, it has meant untold hardship to non-Moslem minorities, and a static condition of civilization, mind, and outlook to Moslems themselves.

As Mohammed lay dying he prayed, "O Lord, I beseech Thee to assist me in the agonies of death." Then three times he ejaculated, "Gabriel, come close unto me." After a little he prayed again, "Lord, grant me pardon, and join me to the companionship on high." Then at intervals he said, "Eternity in Paradise." "Pardon." "Yes, the blessed companionship on high." And all was still. The Prophet was dead.¹

Thus passed this strange fascinating personality. To the end he was the same curious combination of spiritual desires and worldly ambitions. In his own lifetime he did what no man before or since has ever done—he united Arabia in the bonds of a new brotherhood. Carlyle, in his *Heroes and Hero Worship*, pays a fine tribute to Mohammed :

He stood there face to face with them [the people] ; bare, not enshrined in any mystery : visibly clouting his own

¹ See Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 385.

cloak, cobbling his own shoes ; fighting, counselling, ordering in the midst of them : they must have seen what kind of a man he was, let him be called what you like. No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three and twenty years of rough actual trial I find something of a veritable hero necessary for that, of itself.

Mohammed did not himself conquer an empire, nor was he an apostle of the highest form of religion. He was head of a state as well as of a church. He was Cæsar and Pope in one. In spite of opposition, trial, and persecution, he succeeded in laying the foundations of a nation, an empire, and a religion. His influence upon posterity must be left to later chapters, when we hope to see how an Arab mind was projected into the world at large, and how the world has reacted, and still does react, to the personality of this Arab of the Arabs.

It will be seen from what has been already stated that it is impossible to portray the character of Mohammed as a consistent whole :

The truth is that the strangest inconsistencies blended together (according to the wont of human nature) throughout the life of the Prophet. The student of the history will trace for himself how the pure and lofty aspirations of Mohammed were first tinged and then gradually debased by a half-unconscious self-deception, and how in this process truth merged into falsehood, sincerity into guile—these opposite principles often co-existing even as active agencies in his conduct.¹

His ambition for reformation was intermingled with his own desires for self-indulgence, and once Mohammed had persuaded himself that he was the favoured of heaven, he justified every flagrant breach of morality by revelations from God condoning his actions. It is the sanction of these things in the Koran, the supposed revelation of God to man, that has given authority for their repetition in

¹ Sir Wm. Muir, *Life of Mohammed*, p. 535.

every age since the Prophet died. The glorification of evil done in the name of God has affected the character of races and people wherever Islam has penetrated. These influences are with us to-day in the Koranic sanctions of polygamy, divorce, slavery, and kindred evils, and it is only fair to say that for this heritage the ultimate responsibility must rest upon the shoulders of Mohammed.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGINS AND SOURCES OF MOHAMMED'S FAITH

LEGEND clusters round Mohammed's nocturnal journey to heaven in the twelfth year of his mission. Only a single verse in the Koran records an event which perhaps more than any other has gripped the imagination of Moham-medan people. In the Koran (chap. 17, v. 1) we read, "Praise be to him who carried his servant by night from the Masjid-ul-Haram (the Mecca temple) to the Masjid-ul-Aksa (the Temple at Jerusalem)." An account of this visit, supposed to have been related by Mohammed himself, is given in the *Mishkatul-Masabih*, where the Prophet tells how he was sleeping on his side when the angel Gabriel came to him and cut out his heart and washed the cavity with Zemzem water and then filled his heart with faith and knowledge, after which a white animal was brought to him to ride upon. Mohammed mounted, and was carried first to the lowest heaven. In answer to a summons from Gabriel the door was opened, and a voice said, "Welcome Mohammed, his coming is well." Here the Prophet saw Adam and saluted him. He then ascended to the second heaven, where he says he saw Jesus and John. In the third heaven he met Joseph, and in the fourth Enoch, in the fifth Aaron, and in the sixth Moses. He relates how he saw Moses weeping, and he asked him why he wept, and he said, "Because one is sent after me of whose people more will enter Paradise than mine." In the seventh heaven he met Abraham, who said, "Welcome, good son and good Prophet." In the seventh heaven he saw a wonderful tree with leaves like elephant's ears, and four rivers, two of which were the Nile and the Euphrates. Instructions

were given him that his people were to pray fifty times a day, but on the advice of Moses, who declared that no man could pray fifty times a day, he returned to the Lord, and eventually prayers were reduced to five times a day. Moses advised that this should be reduced, but the Prophet was ashamed to ask for a further reduction, and accepted the command which he communicated to his people. As he passed down through the heavens a crier called, "I have established my divine commandments and have made them easy to my servants." The Prophet awoke in Mecca and related his adventure.

Many Moslems regard this as merely a vision, but there is no doubt that the majority accept it as the true story of a literal journey to heaven.

However we may interpret it, the story will help us to understand the Moslem view of the source and origin of Islam. Moslems claim that their faith came direct from heaven. The Koran was sent down by God through the agency of the angel Gabriel to Mohammed. The Koran is, therefore, believed to be a divine book, eternal in origin, every word of which is kept in the records of heaven upon a preserved table. God is the one and only source of Islam, and all that the Koran contains was a divine communication into which no human element entered.

In spite of this tradition we must study the sources of Islam from a historical point of view if we are to understand the system of theology and ethics built up by Mohammed and accepted by many millions in the world to-day. It is certain that there are many sources of Islam, other than the celestial one; we will therefore begin our investigation with Arabia in the days of Mohammed.

The period of history prior to the mission of the Prophet is known in Islam as "the time of ignorance," and Moslems generally paint these days in the blackest possible colour in order to throw into relief the beneficent work of Mohammed. Arab life, then as now, can be roughly divided into that of the Bedouin or nomad Arabs, who wander over the

desert, and the town Arabs, who are for the most part traders and merchants.

Civilization among the nomadic tribes has always been of a low order, and in the seventh century tribe was at war with tribe. Blood feuds were an everyday occurrence, much as they are now. The people were pagans and idolaters. Female infanticide was a cruel custom in common practice. Polyandry and polygamy were both common. Slavery was an accepted custom. But other forces at work in Arabia were fast undermining the polytheism of the more serious-minded Arabs. The gods were becoming more and more nebulous, and the age-long belief in one supreme God was stirring the thoughts of Arabs in both town and desert. The idea of one God (Allah) did not begin in Arabia with Mohammedanism, for the word Allah was in common use hundreds of years before Mohammed's time, and in the darkest days of ignorance the Arabs always believed in a Supreme Deity who was propitiated through the mediation of lesser gods. These deities were intercessors, and names as familiar in Moslem lands as Abd Allah were common in the time of ignorance. Poetry flourished, and Mohammed used verse as the style of his revelations, a medium most calculated to win the approval of the Arabs. The Black Stone of Mecca (kissed by Moslem pilgrims to this day) was a pagan symbol, and the Kaaba was the shrine and home of the Arab gods. Mohammed thus took over into Islam the Meccan temple, together with polygamy, slavery, and many other entirely pagan customs. He forbade infanticide and polyandry, and he swept away intermediary gods and established the worship of Allah. He emphasizes in the Koran that no intercessors are needed until the Day of Judgment. There can be no doubt that the customs, rites, and beliefs of the Arabs were an important source of Islam.

In towns such as Mecca there were many links with the outside world, and trade routes from north and south converged on the sacred city. The merchants of the West

found a good market for their wares in Mecca, and the Hedjaz was not then the isolated country that it is to-day. Its doors were thrown open to the world, and there was intercourse between Mecca and many great cities which brought into it the thought and religion of the word beyond Arabia.

The Jews were a powerful factor in the peninsula. Many tribes of Jews were settled around Medina. They were known as "The People of the Book." Mohammed, therefore, in beginning his mission had in the Jewish conception of religion a model to hand with a great historical background which was easy of adaptation. Mohammed from the first saw that he could not introduce an entirely new faith, and he bore witness to the faith of Abraham and the truth of Judaism. He studied the beliefs, customs, and stories of the Old Testament, and thus developed the theory of one world-religion of which he was the final Prophet. The Koran abounds in stories of Cain and Abel, Abraham, Moses, and all the outstanding characters of the Old Testament. The tales in the Talmud also were taken over wholesale. Jewish teaching had paved the way for Mohammed, and Arabia was ready for a monotheistic movement. Jewish theology lies at the back of much in the Moslem conception of religion. More than this, the very claim that Mohammed makes for the eternal Koran, "Truly it is the glorious Koran on a preserved table" (Koran, chap. 85, v. 21-22) is taken from a Jewish tradition, and refers in its original source, not to the Koran at all but to the Law of Moses (Deut. x. 1-5).

So far we have seen Islam adapting itself under Mohammed to Arab ways, taking over pagan customs and rites, and for its religious history accepting Jewish tradition and embellishing it in Moslem colours. We now turn to a third source of Islam—Christianity. A knowledge of the Christian faith was diffused throughout Arabia through the Christian churches on the borders of the country. Syria to the north was Christian, and the Church spread down

through Transjordan and along the Gulf of Akaba. The commerce between Syria and Mecca was considerable, and with trade came Christianity. East of the Jordan many monks and hermits lived an ascetic life which attracted the attention of the Arabs: It was part of the policy of Byzantine Rome to support strongly the Christian Arabs on the confines of the Hedjaz, since they acted as bulwarks against any possible Persian encroachments. In Mecca itself Christianity had been established, and Mohammed came into direct contact with Christian Arabs, from whom he learned much about Christianity.

Another Christian district was Mesopotamia to the north-east, and a proportion of this Church at least was composed of Arabs. The Church, through missionary activity before the time of Mohammed, had spread into Arabia along the Persian Gulf, and Yemen to the south was a Christian country. South Arabia enjoyed a high state of civilization, beyond anything attained there since that time under Mohammedanism, and this was in "the time of ignorance"—to use the Moslem phrase. The Hedjaz, therefore, was ringed round with Christian influence, and a considerable knowledge of Christianity spread into the interior. Poetry contemporary with Mohammed speaks of Christian rites and ceremonies, fasts and festivals. The monks are mentioned as those "devoted to God." Christianity is the source, direct or indirect, of many words and ideas used by Mohammed. Prayer, prophets, a holy book, revelation, praise, were ideas not unknown to the Arabs; they had been learned by them from Jewish and Christian sources.

The position, therefore, in Arabia in the seventh century was that non-Arab religious influences were powerfully at work. The traditional pagan religion was breaking up through contacts with the outside world. New ideas were permeating the thought of Arabia. The old gods were being discarded in favour of a monotheistic form of worship. There appears to have been a spirit of unrest and search

for a more satisfying faith.¹ Everything goes to show that there was in the seventh century an atmosphere of religious thought out of which Mohammed developed his monotheistic faith. What won Arabia to his allegiance was not the originality of his ideas, for they were mostly borrowed from other sources, but the intense conviction with which he preached them. He pondered deeply over the religious problems of his day and won to his side the finest Arabs of the land. His political genius enabled him to harness this religious revival to a world-wide political scheme, and as his plans developed he accommodated his faith to the demands of political expediency. He was never over-scrupulous in details, but he adhered strictly to the great purpose of his life and ever pressed forward to the accomplishment of his great task. It is true then, as Edwin Arnold puts it, that "Islam was born in the desert with Arab Sabæanism for its mother and Judaism for its father; its ~~foster-nurse~~ was Christianity."

To sum up, we see Islam as an eclectic faith with Pagan, Jewish, and Christian elements; Mohammed produced little that was original or new. Yet his mind was quick, versatile, and original. His originality lay in his welding of these various cults and creeds into a whole, with a system so Arab in type as to win and hold the Arab mind ever since. Much of what he absorbed from the Jews and Christians had become part of Arab thought, and Mohammed probably imbibed it from Arab sources; thus it would have an Arab flavour and complexion. His claim to be an Arab prophet also was original. The one thing fundamental to Mohammed's mind was his idea of God. It would be a mistake to imagine that Mohammed began his mission with the full concept of his religion, or that his ideas of God were anything like complete at first. What started him on his career as a prophet may have been the impression that the end of the world was near, as some writers claim. But there was a mystical vein in Mohammed

¹ See *Islam—A Challenge to Faith*, S. M. Zwemer, pp. 3-6.

which makes it much more likely that the tremendous fact of the unity of God so stirred him that for a time all else appeared insignificant. Then the practical side of the man asserted itself, and Mohammed began to see himself as a prophet ruling as God's vicegerent on earth. The unity of God was his inspiration, and the unity of Arabia his ambition.

The Prophet's conception of God takes shape in his mind as a God of mercy and goodness. This is a marked characteristic of his teaching in the Mecca days. Amid the persecutions and difficulties amongst his fellow-townsmen Mohammed falls back upon the thought of God's goodness. He encourages himself and his flock by the thought of God's help: "Thy Lord hath not left thee nor forsaken thee. Verily the end will be better than the beginning. The Lord will give thee thy satisfaction." Such a verse reminds one of many similar parts of both the Old and New Testaments. Mohammed grasped a great truth, and on it appealed to his people to recognize with gratitude the good hand of God.

Out of this idea of goodness sprang the thought of social and moral reforms. Thus we find immediately following instructions about almsgiving and kindness. Mohammed had felt poverty as a boy, and he enjoins charity towards the orphan and the beggar. Other evils are attacked, and he denounces false balances and the abuses and injustices of the day. "His conscience was no doubt formed by that Jewish-Christian atmosphere which had penetrated Arabia."¹ The doctrines of Heaven and Hell gradually began to play an important part in his preaching. Those who opposed him were threatened with the wrath of God and the fires of hell. It is not necessary to believe that this was simply a ruse to compel adherence to his cause. His whole conception of God had made the idea of judgment a part of his moral consciousness and the fear of punishment never left him. His pathetic plea for pardon

¹ *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*, by R. Bell, p. 82.

when he was dying bears witness to this. The doctrine of prayer followed naturally in his mind. He must have seen Christian worship and synagogue services, and he instituted set periods of prayer, borrowing at the time the Christian word *salat* for prayer. It was not until later that he developed the five fixed daily hours of prayer.

The next great influence in his life was the fact that the people around him who had a religion that appealed to him were people of a book. He believed that their faith was in essentials the same as the creed which he sought to establish. They had a book. He must have a book too. He had, therefore, no hesitation in adopting large parts of the Jewish and Christian beliefs. Stories from the Bible were taken over and passed on as part of his new and divine revelation. Where differences and discrepancies between his version and the accounts given by Jews and Christians were pointed out to him he accused his opponents of having falsified the Scriptures. There is an opportunism about this that shows a certain practical cunning from quite an early stage in his mission. Discrepancies were made a further proof of his Divine message. Jews and Christians had altered the Holy Book, and God had sent down to him the true version, abrogating all that went before, and bringing light and guidance to the faithful. The Bible and apocalyptic literature were a veritable mine of information to him. The denunciations of prophets of old, the horrors of hell, and the delights of heaven were depicted in the warm colouring of Arab poetic fancy, and when he was questioned his one answer was, "God hath revealed it."

Mohammed, as we have seen, adopted the Arabic word Allah as the name for God. To this he added many epithets to define the attributes of God, until there were ninety-nine names, including the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Holy, the Mighty, the Forgiving, the Glorious, the Truth. Of all these attributes the greatest stress is placed upon the mercy of God. Abu Hurairah tells that Mohammed declared, "Verily there are ninety-

nine names of God, and whosoever recites them shall enter into Paradise." Allah to the Moslem is not only the Supreme Being. He is the absolute Semitic despot who guides aright and leads astray, who decrees the fate of all men, closing the minds of those who cannot believe and opening the hearts of others to the faith. The sovereignty of God dominates all thought, and although mercy is taught in almost every page of the Koran yet it is only mercy to the believer. Towards unbelievers there is always the threat of terrible punishment. The overthrow of Pharaoh at the Red Sea gave Mohammed the clue to what he believed to be God's attitude to His people. The children of Israel became a conquering people who were first separated from the infidels by their call from Egypt, and who, after obeying the Divine command, saw the destruction of their enemies at the Red Sea and marched forward to the overthrow of the unbelievers in the Promised Land. This story probably served to illustrate Mohammed's own experience. He was called to separate himself in the flight from Mecca to Medina. The battle of Bedr was his Red Sea victory, when the Meccans, a thousand strong, were defeated by a small Moslem force of only three hundred. From the day of this battle Mohammed looks out upon the promised land of conquest and victory for Islam. Islam from now on begins to take definite shape. Mohammed regards himself as a prophet in the same sense as Moses, with a like mission, and a corresponding intimacy with God.

In the Medina period Mohammed seems to have acquired a more accurate knowledge of Jewish literature. Abraham is now placed at the head of a great list of prophets. Islam is the faith of Abraham—anterior therefore to both Judaism and Christianity. It stands on a basis of its own and with a special commission to lead Jews and Christians back to Abraham, from whose message they have sadly departed. This new policy cleared the air for Moslems, many of whom had only a confused idea of the relative

positions of other faiths, and it enabled Mohammed to rebut the charge that he was seeking to set up a new faith contradictory to what had been given in previous revelations which he himself had professed to accept as genuine. The new phase of Islam seen in the Medina period did more than this. It brought with it a new attitude to both Judaism and Christianity. Islam had passed out of the atmosphere of simple faith in God into the more worldly zone of a political religion with Mohammed as a theocratic ruler of a new religious state without frontiers. The world was divided between this state, over which God ruled through his vicegerent Mohammed, and the rest of mankind, who were unbelievers, and who were to be subdued—slain if necessary—but at all costs brought within the Moslem fraternity. Opposition to Mohammed was, therefore, opposition to God, and unbelief was stubbornness of heart against the revealed will of God. This gave Islam a colour that has ever since marred its work in the world. Mohammed called upon the Jews to believe, and when they refused he turned on them in savage fury. The direction in which a Moslem turned in prayer was changed from Jerusalem to the Kaaba at Mecca. The Jewish fast on the Day of Atonement, which had at first been adopted, was changed for the Fast of Ramadan. The Beni Kainuka, a Jewish tribe, was stripped of all its wealth and goods and driven out of Medina. Other Jewish tribes were slaughtered and their children made slaves. Denunciations of the Jews followed in rapid succession, and Islam hardened into a system which stood for enmity against all who refused allegiance to the Prophet.

It is difficult to say whether Judaism or Christianity influenced Mohammed most. For a time he seems scarcely to have distinguished between the two. The fifth chapter of the Koran, entitled "The Table," was given at Medina, and contains many references to the Christian faith. "They are infidels who say verily God is Christ the son of Mary," says Mohammed. In the same chapter we read,

"We also caused Jesus the son of Mary to follow the footsteps of the prophets, confirming the law sent down before Him, and we gave Him the Gospel, containing direction and light." He returns again to the doctrine of the Trinity and declares, "If they refrain not from what they say, a painful torment shall surely be inflicted upon such of them [the Christians] as are unbelievers. Christ, the son of Mary, is no more than an Apostle." Apocryphal tales of Christ having spoken while a babe in the cradle and of His having given life to clay birds are related. The miracles of the healing of the blind and the raising of the dead are mentioned. The chapter is called "The Table" because in it is told a story of how God caused a table to descend from heaven to Jesus. The table, so commentators tell us, was spread with cakes of bread, fish, and flesh. When the people ate of the food they were healed of infirmities and sicknesses. Some writers say that the table descended daily for forty days. Around this story fabulous tales have been woven, but it puzzles us to know what Mohammed had in mind. Both Rodwell and Sale see in it a reference to the Sacrament. If so, it but shows how very unreliable and scanty was Mohammed's knowledge of Christianity. The Prophet's early references to Christians are, on the whole, friendly, but with his accession to power his attitude changed. He had thundered forth "Obey God and obey me," but the Christians did not respond, and their lot was much the same as that of the Jews.

His main attack on the Christian faith was directed against the Crucifixion, which he repudiated. He developed the old Gnostic theory that it was a substitute, "like unto Christ," and not Christ Himself who was crucified. When Christians boldly faced him with New Testament accounts of the Cross he roundly accused them of having corrupted the Scriptures. To back up this assertion he takes the promise of Christ that He would send the Holy Spirit, and by twisting the Greek word, *Paraclete* (the Comforter) he makes it read "the praised,"

which he asserts is the meaning of the Arabic word Ahmed, another name for Mohammed. The promise of the Holy Spirit is thus turned into a prophecy of the coming of Mohammed. This, he claimed, proved that the Christians had altered the Scriptures in order to reject God's messenger—Mohammed. Thus the breach widened between Mohammed and the Christians and ended in open war :

Fight against those who do not believe in God.

The Jews say that Ezra is the Son of God and the Christians say that the Messiah is the Son of God. God fight against them ! How they are deceived.

As Mohammed's life drew to a close his super-tribal scheme of religion was taking shape as an independent faith, standing on its own foundations, with its own creed and revelation, and in open hostility to Judaism and Christianity. Mohammed bequeathed to his people a national unity, a common faith, a political and social system, and a code of laws dealing with anything from the creed to be said down to laws of vengeance, marriage regulations, inheritance, and property. To the Moham-medan, this and a great deal more is summed up in the one word Islam, a word that has many derivations : it means to be tranquil or at peace, and the Moslem connotation is "to surrender oneself to Him with whom peace is made." The devout Moslem interprets the principles upon which the Islamic system is based as follows :

- (1) The belief in the unity, unmateriality, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator ;
- (2) Charity and brotherhood among mankind ;
- (3) Subjugation of the passions ;
- (4) The outpouring of a grateful heart to the Giver of all good ; and
- (5) Accountability for human actions in another existence.

The grand and noble conceptions expressed in the Koran of the power and love of the Deity surpass everything of their kind in any other language. The Unity of God, His Immateriality, His Majesty, His Mercy form the constant and never-ending theme of the most eloquent and soul-stirring passages. The flow of life, light, and spirituality never ceases. But throughout there is no trace of dogmatism. Appeal is made to the inner consciousness of man, to his intuitive reason alone.¹

This is no doubt the idealism of a devout mind, but plain facts modify the picture considerably, and tone down the colours.

The creed, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Apostle of God," is certainly dogmatic. Simple and brief, it has echoed down the centuries as a challenge to all other creeds, and in it is contained not simply a belief in God, but in all that Mohammed believed God to be. It is not only faith in a prophet, but a demand of absolute submission to that prophet in all that he taught as the representative of God on earth. Thus to accept the creed involves an acceptance of the whole Islamic system.

Moslem belief in God means faith in God the Self-existent, the Causer of causes, the Infinite. He is Almighty, Omniscient, Living. Nothing happens except by His will and power, whether it is good or evil. He does whatever He pleases. This involves the doctrine that God has a right to punish whom He will, whether they have done wrong or not. The basis of this idea lies in the sovereignty of God, which dominates such attributes as mercy and love. Sovereignty is, therefore, despotic power uncontrolled by any attribute. God shows mercy when and if He wills to do so, but He is under no compulsion to do so.

The Moslem doctrine of God thus differs from the Christian conception, which defines God in His essence as love. Where Islam proclaims "God is great" the Christian

¹ *The Spirit of Islam*, by Sayed Ameer Ali, p. 226.

affirms "God is love." For this reason the whole idea of Fatherhood is absent from the Moslem idea of God. The many attributes of God in the Koran are beautiful in expression, but their force is lost by the overshadowing thought of ungoverned despotic power, which operates in terms of these attributes only if God wills to do so. The relationship of God to mankind is that of master and slave as opposed to the Christian idea of father and children.

While modern Moslems deny that fatalism is a basic idea in the Moslem conception of God, yet the absolute decree of good and evil has always been recognized as an article of belief. Moslems generally accept the doctrine that everything, good and evil, is fixed and recorded on a preserved tablet. This has been a much-disputed doctrine among Moslem theologians, but the average Mohammedan accepts the Koranic statement literally—"All things have been created after a fixed decree"—and fatalism is a marked characteristic of Moslem peoples. In Egypt, when the cotton worm was threatening seriously the whole crop of the year, the government issued strict orders for the destruction of the pest, but many Moslems at the time refused to obey the instructions, and said, "The worm is from Allah, He will remove it when He wills." Fatalism held the people so strongly that they feared to collect and destroy the worm lest they should displease God by seeming to oppose what He had sent.

This attitude of mind, which leaps over all other causes to the Cause, and consequently throws the blame for everything in life upon God, may fairly be said to be the orthodox view for which Mohammed himself is directly responsible. Anyone who has lived in a Moslem land knows how familiar are the words *Kadar* and *Takdir*. "It is fated" is an everyday expression. "God guides whom He pleases and misleads whom He pleases." Where the conception of God in Islam differs from the Christian conception is in the fact that if all things, good and evil, are

decreed from before the birth of a man it makes God the source of moral evil, and denies that the cause of evil is to be found in the misuse of the human will.

Next to belief in God a Moslem must believe in angels. There are four principal angels in Islam: Gabriel, the messenger of God—the angel of the revelation: Mikail, the friend and guardian of the Jews; Azrafil, who will sound the last trump; Azrael, the angel of death. Every believer also is said to be attended by two angels—one to record his good deeds, and the other his bad deeds. Two angels, Munkar and Nakir, are the examiners of the dead in their graves. Mohammed had a profound belief in the reality of the spirit world. In battle he declared that thousands of angels aided the Moslem armies (Koran 8, 120). They intercede in heaven for people on earth. The throne of God is supported by eight angels who bear it up (Koran 69, 17). Angels act as guardians of hell. One of Mohammed's curious misconceptions of Christianity is connected with the angel Gabriel. Mohammed confounded him with the Holy Spirit, and seems to have thought that, because Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit and the angel Gabriel came to her, the two were the same person. The New Testament references to the Holy Spirit as the guide and inspiration of the apostles may have led Mohammed, through this confusion of thought, to make Gabriel the angel of his revelation.

In addition to a belief in angels, Moslems have been taught by the Prophet of a whole world of spirits called *genii*. A chapter in the Koran is devoted to this subject. These *genii* are a mixed multitude—some good and some evil. On one occasion Mohammed preached to a company of *genii*, and records his experience in the following verse, "Say: it hath been revealed to me that a company of *genii* listened and said—Verily we have heard a marvellous discourse." Mohammed took over the whole mythology of the desert in regard to spirits. The change in doctrine which he made was to reduce the *genii* from the position

of gods to that of created beings essentially different in nature from Allah ; but the whole world of spirits, good and evil, was maintained with its attendant magic and charms to protect the believer.

Readers of the *Arabian Nights* look upon the stories of the practical jokes and tricks of the genii as fairy tales, but few perhaps realize how deeply embedded in the system of Islam is this belief in genii. These people are said to be a pre-Adamite race who still inhabit the world. They are of both sexes, and take many shapes and forms, such as serpents, wolves, and scorpions. Any one who has travelled across the desert of Sinai is familiar with the whirlwind desert storms, when the sand swirling in a great pillar sweeps across the desert. This the Moslems believe to be the genii in flight.

The system of Islam is thus strangely built up of a Jewish monotheism mixed with Christian elements, the fatalism of the desert, and the mythology of a nomadic people.

Coupled with the belief in God and spirits is the belief in the Last Day. Mohammed from the first was deeply moved at the idea of a Judgment Day, and the Last Day is variously described in the Koran as a " Day of Separation," a " Day of Reckoning," and a " Day of Awakening." Around this was built up an eschatology partly Jewish and Christian in origin. Two angels of death visit every one immediately after burial to examine them. These are *Munkar* and *Nakir*. According to the answers given, the deceased's soul either wanders between earth and the lower heavens, or remains in a state of sleep till the last trump, or lives in the crops of birds of paradise, or, as some think, dwells as a white bird under the throne of God. Although Moslems frequently speak nowadays of a spiritual resurrection only, yet the generally accepted belief—and it is based on much teaching in the Koran—is that of a physical resurrection. Mohammed believed that the body decayed in the grave with the exception of one bone ; and

borrowing from a Jewish source, he taught that on the Last Day God would send rain for forty days which would cause the bodies to sprout again. The Jewish tradition says that it is dew, not rain, which will impregnate the earth. Many signs are mentioned in Islam of the Last Day. The following are some of them :

The decay of faith among men ; people of humble degree will be given the highest positions ; adultery will be rife, civil strife, revolutions, much distress, and the people of Persia and Syria will refuse to pay their alms. Following these general signs come more definite indications of the end of the world : such are the coming of the Mahdi ; of the Antichrist with the letters K F R on his forehead, letters which stand in Arabic for Kafir, an unbeliever ; the second advent of Jesus Christ, who is to appear near the mosque at Damascus, to marry, beget children, die, and be buried in Medina ; the great beast ; and the coming of Gog and Magog. These signs culminate when the sun will rise in the west ; then the Kaaba will be destroyed, the Koran forgotten, and unbelief will prevail.

At the Judgment a bridge will be placed over the fires of hell. It will be as narrow as a single hair and sharp as a sword. The true believers will experience no difficulty in crossing, but the infidels will fall into the fire below, for the unpardonable sin in Islam is idolatry. Chapter 75 of the Koran deals fully with the subject of the resurrection. It is also mentioned in chapters 81, 82, 83. It is easy to see from the foregoing that this eschatology is by no means original, but is borrowed practically in its entirety from Jewish and Christian sources.

The second half of a Moslem's religion is the religious practices enjoined in Islam. For the regulation of religion there are five duties imposed upon all—prayer, alms, fasting, pilgrimage, and the repetition of the creed. To this, some add a sixth—the jihad (holy war). It is doubtful whether it should be placed in the same category as prayers and fasting, but nevertheless it is one of the laws

of Mohammed. The commands in the Koran are explicit and clear.

The fact that the world was divided into two parts—the House of Islam and the House of War—is evidence of the real design behind the law of warfare upon the unbeliever. It is popular in modern Moslem literature to-day to assert that the jihad was only for the defence of Islam and never for purposes of aggression; but if this is so, Abu Bekr, the first caliph after the death of Mohammed, must have violated the commands of the Prophet when he sent his armies to ravage the outer world and to conquer Persia, Palestine, and North Africa. Some Moslem writers tell us that a jihad cannot be made unprovoked, but the followers of Mohammed based their practice on the example of their leader, who carried his sword through Arabia in a series of unprovoked attacks upon peaceful tribes.

The object of a jihad was world-conversion to Islam, and history shows the extent to which Islam went in compulsion and force in seeking to preach the unity of God. As an incentive to the warriors, four-fifths of all the spoils of war were divided among those who had taken part in the battle, and among the spoils were reckoned the captives. Wives of enemy captives were handed over as concubines to the victors, even when their husbands were living, and slavery was the lot of prisoners captured in war. Moslem writers to-day would have us believe that these things are not so. In defence, they point to the evils of Europe, to the divorce courts of the West, and to the fact that slavery existed in Europe until comparatively recent times. What they fail to see is that while these evils are done in violation of Christian ideals and precepts, in Islam they are carried out by the commands of Mohammed himself, backed by his own example, and strengthened by what is claimed to be the will of God revealed in the Koran.

Islam at the Prophet's death was a complete system ready to be projected into the non-Arab world. It stood, as we have seen, upon the twofold foundation of the

unity of God and the prophetic office of Mohammed. Its theology, largely borrowed from other sources, included a belief in heaven, hell, angels, resurrection, and a catastrophic end of the world. Moslems were given certain rules of life regulating prayer, alms, fasting, etc., and they were fired by a great enthusiasm, through the appeal for a holy war, to go out and conquer the world. We will now seek to trace the fortunes of this faith as it makes its impact upon other races and creeds, and as non-Arab cultures make their contribution to Islam in the wider atmosphere of the world beyond Mecca.

CHAPTER IV

EMPIRE BUILDING IN ISLAM

SOME years ago I was travelling through Transjordan, and early one morning made the ascent of the reputed Mount Pisgah, where Moses stood and viewed the Promised Land. The point we reached stood some 5000 feet above the Dead Sea level. In the clear morning air there opened before us a wonderful panorama. Looking north we could see Hermon, snow-clad and glistening in the sun ; the whole of the Sea of Galilee lay stretched out before us, and we could trace the River Jordan from the point where it flowed out of the Sea of Galilee the whole way along its course until it emptied itself in the Dead Sea. Looking west, we clearly made out with the naked eye houses in Samaria ; in the distance could be descried the tower of the Russian Church on the Mount of Olives, while to the south lay the Dead Sea with range on range of the mountains of Moab running down into Arabia and the Hedjaz, the home and heart of Islam. The whole of Palestine seemed to be literally at our feet. As I stood on the mountain-top I pictured to myself the small Arab army that had started out in the year in which the Prophet died to conquer the world. Abu Bakr, the first caliph and the immediate successor of Mohammed, had sent it forth to pit its strength against Byzantine Rome. The Arab troops had marched north from Medina, through Transjordan, and passed over the very country we were surveying from Pisgah's heights. There is something sublime in the faith of Abu Bakr who, with a small army of about four thousand warriors, set out to subjugate the whole world to Allah. How near his ambition came to

succeeding this chapter will show. This army was a body of free-spirited men who had never yielded to any outside authority, and had unbounded confidence in both their leaders and their cause. They met an organized Roman force, but they encountered people everywhere chafing under Byzantine misrule. No such thing as popular resistance was made against the Arabs. In fact, people hailed their coming as liberators from a detested rule. The Christian Arabs of Transjordanian joined the Mohammedan force, and in some cases the Jews made common cause with them. Within a very short time the Arab invasion developed into a social revolution against the established order of government. The choice given by the Arabs to non-Moslem people was one of three alternatives—either to pay tribute, or embrace Islam, or die. This rapidly turned the movement into a religious revolution with a new intellectual vitality.

The River Yarmuk flows down from the Hauran plain through a deep gorge along which to-day the railway travels from the south end of the Sea of Galilee to Dera. It was in this gorge that the Roman army with its back to the river fought a great battle against the Arabs in the year 634. The odds were heavily against the followers of Mohammed. They were outnumbered; they had none of the splendid equipment the Roman troops displayed. But they fought with a glittering vision of victory or Paradise before them; numerically they were insignificant, but every man counted, and with irresistible force they swept the Roman troops back into the river, which soon became choked with the dead. Defeat turned to disaster, and the rout that followed became a horrible massacre. In a single battle Syria and Palestine fell under the Moslem sway. The Romans evacuated the country, falling back towards Constantinople. The road to Egypt and North Africa was open. Islam had sprung into being almost unnoticed by the rest of the world. No one took seriously the man in Medina who, calling himself a prophet,

demanding allegiance from the kings of the earth ; but from the battle of the Yarmuk onwards the world recognized in Islam a force with which it must reckon.

It is only by taking a long sweep of history that the true significance of the nomads of the Arabian peninsula appears. The reserve of forces held within the great stretches of desert has often been unnoticed until suddenly a swarming period has come and these men of Semitic blood have swept forth north, south, east, and west in conquest. The Canaanites (2500 B.C.), who were Semites, long before Abraham occupied the coasts of Palestine after some such migration from the inhospitable desert. The Amorites who, under Hammurabi, swarmed through what is now Mesopotamia and founded the Babylonian Empire (3500 B.C.), were of the same stock. The Assyrians were another settled branch of the Semitic people. The sixteenth dynasty in Egypt was founded by the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, who appeared suddenly out of the desert and in one sweep captured the civilization of Egypt and ruled the country for five hundred years until about 1600 B.C., when they were driven out of the country. The invasion of Palestine by the children of Israel was another such Semitic movement. These swarming periods left their mark on history ; great empires and dynasties arose out of them : but the Arab always left behind in the desert a remnant, which in course of time generated new forces for further conquests.

Nomad Arabs 'seldom attack a settled population wantonly, but only under necessity caused by drought and the failure of pasturage. The struggle for existence in the desert is a struggle for water. It has generally been economic pressure that has compelled these movements of the population in the direction from which relief could most easily be found. The usual process was for a tribe or tribes to be impelled forth by the haunting dread of drought, and once in motion they kept going until their impetus had exhausted itself and they had found a

people they were strong enough to dislodge. Such a migration occurred in the early seventh century from north-western Arabia, and the tribe ended their trek in Tunis. It is significant that this happened shortly before the great expansion of Islam: "in fact the irruption of Arabs from the Arabian peninsula, though set in motion by the religion of the Prophet, was the result of a long process of desiccation for which there is no lack of evidence."¹ Sufficient notice has perhaps not been given to the fact that, while the religion of Islam provides the immediate motive for the overflowing of Arab life into the world beyond, yet the root cause was the age-long one—the drying up of great breeding places in Arabia and the consequent lack of pasture. Drought spelt starvation, and yet, strange to say, drought has been one of the primary causes throughout history for the raising of Semitic people from a nomadic desert life to imperial power. The Moslem expansion, which is a good illustration of this, was the last of such movements on any large scale that the world has so far witnessed, and the great empire built up out of it was simply history repeating itself. Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and Palestine all felt in their turn the consuming fire of the desert peoples, who for centuries appeared to be stagnant and without ambition, until suddenly the smouldering fire burst into flames, and kingdoms "half as old as time" came tottering to the ground before the resistless march of these wild sons of the desert.

Mohammed had stirred the imagination of these people, and they, with little, if any, knowledge of their ancestors' history, obeyed the same instincts. Now we see them, having inflicted a severe defeat upon their enemies, boldly marching forward to the conquest of lands which had for centuries been the home of art, culture, and civilization.

People in the surrounding countries regarded them as uncivilized barbarians. The Arabs gave no sign of any

¹ *A Study of Races in the Ancient Near East*, William H. Worrell, p. 6.

latent dangerous energy, and Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, at first puzzled and contemptuous, was forced back into Asia Minor and finally compelled to admit that he had met a force that could with impunity defy the power of Byzantine Rome. Abu Bakr struck the keynote of Islam when he said in his opening address to the army about to march north: "When a people leaveth off to fight in the ways of the Lord the Lord casteth off that people." Like locusts these Arabs swarmed over neighbouring countries; column followed column until whole tribes issued forth to fight for the faith and settled east and west in the rich lands of the then civilized world. The free spirit of the desert proved stronger than the organized autocracy of Constantinople.

Abu Bakr's reign was a brief two years, and shortly before the victory on the Yarmuk he passed away, having nominated Omar as his successor.

Omar was a strong man with a great reputation for just dealing. In the early days of Mohammed's preaching he had been a bitter opponent of Islam, but his conversion came suddenly, and none can doubt the sincerity of it. He had shared the hardships of the early days in Medina, and in the triumphs of Islam he had borne a leading part. Success had never spoiled him, and when he was called to be caliph he was still the same simple-minded, generous-hearted, and humble disciple of his Prophet.

One of Omar's first acts was to order the advance of the army through Syria to Damascus; in December 634, this, the oldest city in the world, was invested and taken by storm after protracted fighting. Half of the total wealth of Damascus passed to the conqueror. All who refused to become Moslems were taxed. The churches were divided, half of them being turned into mosques and the other half left to the Christians. The cathedral of St John the Baptist was jointly used at first by both Moslems and Christians, but after a time the Christians were ejected, the building passed into Moslem hands, and

has been a mosque ever since. All Syria now passed under the rule of Islam ; but while the Christian Bedouin as a rule became Moslems the town people remained loyal to their old faith. The leader of the Arab army now turned his attention to Palestine ; in a short time the country was subdued, after little opposition, and the army approached Jerusalem, a city of many sieges. The Patriarch sued for peace, but stipulated that the Caliph should come in person to receive the capitulation of the city. This Omar consented to do, and he travelled from Medina to the gates of Jerusalem, where he was met by the Patriarch and conducted through the city. The following terms of capitulation were drawn up and signed by the Caliph :

This is the security which Omar, the servant of God, the commander of the faithful, grants to the people of Jerusalem. He grants to all security for their lives, their possessions, and their children, their churches, their crosses and all that appertains to them in their integrity, and their lands and to all of their religion. Their churches therein shall not be impoverished nor destroyed nor injured from among them ; neither their endowments nor their dignity ; and not a thing of their property, neither shall the inhabitants of Jerusalem be exposed to violence in following their religion, nor shall one of them be injured.¹

A significant sign of the early influence of western civilization upon the devout Arab was seen when Omar arrived at Jerusalem. He was met by a mounted guard of Arab leaders all dressed in the richest Syrian garments. At the sight of this change Omar's soul was stirred. The simplicity of life practised by the Prophet had gone in a moment. With something of the spirit of Joshua at Jericho, he cried, " Is it thus attired ye come to meet me, changed in two short years ? "—and he flung gravel at them in contempt of their finery. The keynote of these early caliphs was desert simplicity. They saw the danger to their cause as well as to the faith in an assimilation of the

¹ Quoted in *The Preaching of Islam*, T. W. Arnold, p. 51.

Arabs to their new environment. They strove to preserve in its purity the faith and life of Islam ; but environment was too powerful a factor even for so great-hearted a man as Omar, and from this time onward Islam adapted itself more and more to the customs of the countries it subdued. Syria passed under Moslem rule, but Islam in turn came under the influence of outside thought. This idea will be developed in later chapters, but it is of interest to note here in passing that in the recent revival of Arab Islam the Wahhabis have sought to make this note of simplicity the dominant one in their efforts to return to pure and undefiled Islam.

By the year 640 plans were complete for the invasion of Egypt. Amr, one of the generals in Palestine, finding life irksome as conquest was followed by inaction, begged leave of the Caliph to invade the valley of the Nile. His objective was Alexandria, because it was the granary for Constantinople, and the seat of commerce and art. When we remember the great armies of Greece and Rome that had marched to the conquest of Egypt we are amazed at the intrepidity of an Arab who, with only four thousand men, set forth to cross the desert of Sinai and to conquer a country with a population of about eight millions. Amr was undaunted. The fear of defeat never entered into his reckoning ; but Omar the Caliph, with wise foresight, saw the danger and sent strong reinforcements which brought the fighting strength up to fifteen thousand.

The route followed was the same as that of the Turkish Moslem army in 1915, when an attempt was made to capture Egypt. But in the days of Amr no Suez Canal intervened to form a barrier, and where the Turks were checked in the Great War, Amr marched on to Belbeis, a frontier town on the east of the Delta. The Arab invasion coincided with the betrothal of Armenosa, the beautiful daughter of the Prefect of Upper Egypt. She was on her way to be betrothed to Constantine, the heir of the Byzantine emperor, when she heard of the Moslem

advance, and she at once fell back upon Belbeis, which she fortified and defended stoutly. Amr at length captured the town; and the treasures of the bridal party, including the bride herself, fell into his hands. The girl was treated with all honour and sent back to her father, and the Arabs moved on to the capture of Alexandria. The city was strongly fortified, and the sea-coast was open to the Greeks, through which they could pour in reinforcements. The resistance was obstinate; but during the siege Heraclius died and the necessary help was not forthcoming from Constantinople. The Greek troops weakly took to their ships and abandoned the city, which after nearly a year's defence capitulated. The Arab army next marched south and established its headquarters near Memphis, at what is now Old Cairo.

Egypt having been subdued, Amr now decided to push his conquests south into Nubia and next through Tripoli. The army operating up the Nile soon came into conflict with the Nubian archers, who put up a stubborn defence of their country; but in the end the Moslems triumphed, although it is recorded that they did not take a single prisoner, for the Nubians fought to the death. The Arabs penetrated as far south as Dongola, at that time a Christian country. In the treaty then concluded the foundations of the Moslem slave-trade in Africa was laid. Three hundred and sixty slaves of both sexes, it was stipulated, were to be delivered annually to the Moslem governor of Assouan; none of them were to be aged people or children below the age of puberty. The actual words of the treaty are worth quoting:

In the Name of God. . . . This is a treaty granted by the Emir Abdullah ibn Saad to the Chief of the Nubians, and to all people of his dominions, a treaty binding on great and small among them from the frontier of Assouan to the frontier of Alwa. . . . Ye people of Nubia, ye shall dwell in safety under the safeguard of God and his apostle, Mohammed, the prophet whom God bless and save. . . .

Ye shall take care of the mosque which the Moslems have built in the outskirts of your city and hinder none from praying there. Ye shall clean it and light it and honour it. Every year ye shall pay three hundred and sixty head of slaves to the leader of the Moslems of the middle class of slaves of your country, without bodily defects, males and females ; but no old men nor old women nor young children. . . . If ye kill a Moslem or an ally or attempt to destroy the mosque the Moslems have built or withhold any of the three hundred and sixty head of slaves then we shall revert to hostilities until God decide between us, and He is the best of umpires.¹

This treaty continued in force for six hundred years, and gradually the whole of Christian Nubia accepted the Moslem faith.

Egypt and the northern parts of the Sudan having been conquered, a leaven of Arab settlers was introduced, and a slow but prolonged process began for the Islamizing of this country.

While the Arabs with one force were conquering the Near East another army was moving eastward into Mesopotamia with Persia as its objective. Abu Bakr, the Caliph, before his death sent Khalid, the Sword of God as he was called, to assume supreme command of the army now seeking to subdue ancient Chaldea. The Moslems, about eighteen thousand strong, moved to the Euphrates and there they came into conflict with the Persian army. To the Persian general, Khalid sent the following message: "Accept the faith and thou art safe ; else pay tribute, thou and thy people ; which if thou refusest thou shalt have thyself to blame. A people is already on thee loving death even as thou lovest life." The Persians, like so many others, made the mistake of under-estimating the strength of their desert foes and suffered in consequence a crushing defeat. Khalid now pushed forward, capturing fortified places and putting the garrisons to the sword.

¹ Quoted in *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, H. A. Macmichael, vol. i. p. 168.

The country was ravaged, the men slaughtered, and the women driven into captivity. At last Persia was thoroughly aroused. A vast army assembled to meet the Arabs, and now, in A.D. 633, the Moslems were harder pressed than ever before. Khalid vowed that if he were victorious the blood of his enemies should flow in a crimson stream. The Persians at length gave way and Khalid fulfilled his vow. Fugitives were rounded up in thousands and brought into the camp. Whole battalions were beheaded and their blood flowed through the dry bed of a canal until it actually turned the mill-wheel near by and ground the corn for the army.¹

By 634, after further severe fighting, the Persian power was crushed in the Euphrates valley. Hira was captured and became the Moslem headquarters. Thus in two short years the whole of Iraq had passed under Moslem rule. When Omar became Caliph he at once deposed Khalid from his command in the east and sent him to fight in Syria. The Persians, encouraged by Khalid's withdrawal, were roused to further efforts, and at length succeeded in inflicting a severe defeat upon the Arabs. In the following year more fighting took place; the fresh troops from Arabia re-established Moslem supremacy, and the whole country was occupied without hindrance. The Persians, however, were not going to surrender the country without a further struggle. In A.D. 635 was fought for five days the famous battle of Cadesiya. The fortunes of war varied from day to day, but the triumph of the Arabs was in the end complete. The royal capital of Medain was captured and the booty won was beyond anything the Arabs had ever before seen. From the junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris down to the shores of the Persian Gulf the rule of Islam was established. Omar now pressed forward to the capture of Persia. Victory followed victory until the country was subdued. Islam offered many privileges to those who accepted the faith,

¹ See William Muir, *The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline, and Fall*, pp. 55-6.

and the Zoroastrians came over by degrees to the new religion of Mohammed: but the cultured Persian, as we shall see, in his adoption of Islam brought a new element into the faith.

While the Arab army was invading Egypt, Omar the Great Caliph was assassinated, while in the mosque of Medina at prayers. The wounded man was carried to his house in a dying condition. His last thoughts were for the preservation of Islamic unity, and he nominated four men from whom a successor was to be chosen. His reign had been a little over ten years, and he died as he had lived in a simple humble faith in God.

At this stage we may pause to sum up what the past ten years had meant to the fortunes of Islam. The two greatest caliphs that Islam was ever to see had passed away. Twelve years had gone since the small Arab army had set out from Medina to conquer the world for Mohammed. It is clear from this first phase of Moslem expansion that Islam had not materially changed the character of the Arabs. The caliphs played upon their predatory instincts and in turn suffered from their free-handed lawlessness. Omar was the first of a long line of caliphs to be assassinated. The leaders of Islam sought to discourage and repress innovations. The thought of the people was carefully guided along clearly defined channels, but in spite of every effort to maintain Islam free from outside influences already there were signs that the great world beyond Arabia was influencing the life, habits, customs, and thoughts of the Arabs.

In these early days the caliphs themselves never led their armies to battle, and one of the most notable features of this movement is the fact that Arabia could produce out of the desert not one or two but many born leaders of men. Khalid, "the Sword of God," Abdullah, Amr, and others were all soldiers, not by training, but by inherent qualities of leadership.

Casualties in battle and overwhelming odds against

them never deterred the Arabs from attempting the seemingly impossible. In the fighting in Syria the Moslems found themselves confronted by a Greek army seventy thousand strong, while the Arabs were divided into smaller forces and scattered. Khalid writes to Amr to come to his help :

In the name of the most merciful God ; from Khalid to Amr, health and happiness. Know that thy brethren design to march to Aiznadin, where there is an army of seventy thousand Greeks who purpose to come against us. As soon as this letter is delivered to thy hands come with those that are with thee to Aiznadin, where thou shalt find us, if it please the Most High God.

The terms offered by the Greeks to buy off the Arabs must often have been tempting ; but the prospect of gold and riches was not allowed to interfere with their triumphant march. These things they knew would be theirs if they gained the victory. On one occasion the Moslem army was met by a venerable old Greek who sought to induce the Arabs to withdraw from Syria on payment of a large sum as indemnity. But Khalid, indignant at such a bribe, replied :

Ye Christian dogs, you know your option : The Koran, the tribute, or the sword. We are a people whose delight is in war rather than peace, and we despise your pitiful alms since we shall be speedily masters of your wealth, your families, and your persons.

In the twelve years since the death of Mohammed we have seen Palestine and Syria with the fair city of Damascus and the holy places of Jerusalem fall under Arab sway. We have watched these same men cross the Sinai desert and capture Egypt and the wealth of Alexandria. We have followed their rapid advance for a thousand miles up the Nile into Dongola and have witnessed the beginnings of the conquest of North Africa. A new empire had sprung up to the west, while to the east Mesopotamia had

surrendered to the Moslem forces. The Arabs might well have considered that they had now occupied as much territory as their limited resources could hold. Their aim was not merely conquest but consolidation; but they did not pause to consolidate. They left governors and troops in each conquered area, and pushed on to still further achievements for Islam.

The first ten years of Islamic expansion were creative years in history. The two great world powers of Byzantine Rome and Persia had suffered untold losses and had been overwhelmed with disaster. Their fairest and richest lands had been wrested from them to form an Arab empire. The Moslems too had suffered many casualties, and, considering the meagre population of Arabia, it seemed as though exhaustion must ensue very soon. The contrary, however, happened. An army pushed its way along the North African coast. This new venture coincided with the commencement of the reign of the third Caliph, Othman, in A.D. 645. The Arabs advanced upon Carthage with an army of about forty thousand men. At Tripoli they were met by the Prefect Gregory with a force computed to be a hundred and twenty thousand strong. Gregory's daughter advanced to the battle with her father, and with bow and scimitar won the admiration of the Arabs. The Moslem general offered her, with a rich present, to the man who slew her father in battle. The Prefect was slain by Zobeir, who carried off the sorrowing daughter to Medina, where he announced to the Caliph the victory of the Moslem army.¹

Meanwhile, other Arab detachments were engaged in campaigns in other fields. The Turks to the west of the Caspian Sea were attacked, but with varying fortunes. The Arabs in Persia, although victorious, suffered heavily. A whole army was lost in the snow around Kerman, and only two men survived to tell the tale.

The losses suffered by the Arabs were alarming, but still

¹ See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. v. pp. 354-5.

fresh hordes poured forth from Arabia to turn disaster into victory. In Syria the army was attacked by fresh troops from Constantinople; the Arabs, however, not only held their own but swarmed over Asia Minor, captured Armenia, and actually reached the Black Sea. The Moslems now turned their attention to the sea, and, fitting out a fleet manned by Egyptians and Arabs, they sailed for Cyprus. The island was easily captured, and the ships returned to Alexandria with spoil and captives. The Greeks, frightened at this new incursion of the ubiquitous Arabs, gathered a fleet of five hundred ships and set out for Alexandria. The Arabs, nothing daunted though vastly inferior in numbers, grappled with the Greek navy and drove it off.

Mohammedan prestige stood at its highest in the outside world, with Islamic armies scattered from Kerman in Persia to the Black Sea and from Armenia to Carthage. But the Arabs, who had held together in a remarkable way up to now, began to break up into factions. The old tribal jealousies reappeared, and storms gathered about the head of Othman the Caliph. A conspiracy was formed, and tumults broke out in Medina which led to civil war; and Othman, after a reign of twelve years, was slain in his own house.

Ali was now elected caliph, but he soon found that the disintegrating forces of tribal factions were more easily roused than allayed, and rebellions followed. Islam was rent in twain. Moslem fought against Moslem, and in the Battle of the Camel the faction of Ali fought against those who sought to avenge Othman. Ten thousand Moslems were slain in about equal numbers on either side. Ali now transferred his headquarters from Medina to Kufa, and the seat of government which, from the days of Mohammed, had been in the sacred city, passed from it never to return again. Conquests in the non-Arab world were brought to a standstill while Arab fought against Arab and two rival caliphs, Ali and Muavia, struggled for supremacy.

If the first twelve years after the death of Mohammed ended in complete triumph for the cause of Islam and the founding of a new empire, the second twelve years closed upon a broken Islam with the empire split up and at war within itself. Egypt broke away from the cause of Ali, and Amr its governor went over to his rival. Troubles continued to dog the reign of Ali until A.D. 661, when, like two of his predecessors, he was assassinated after a reign of only four years, which were surely among the most momentous in Moslem history. The murder of Ali instead of ending the strife made confusion worse confounded. He left two sons, Hassan and Hussein, neither of whom had any ambition to be caliph. Muavia now asserted his claim to be caliph; Hassan, who had been appointed, abdicated in his favour, and a few months later was poisoned. Muavia now ruled as caliph with undisputed power, and once more Arab energies were turned towards conquest. A Moslem force penetrated Afghanistan and captured Kabul. The war in North Africa, that had been suspended for twenty years, was recommenced, and the Arabs carried the sword to the Atlantic Ocean. At the same time a formidable force crossed Asia Minor and the Bosphorus in an attempt to capture Constantinople. For seven years the Moslems tried to reduce the city to submission and finally abandoned the effort as hopeless. Muavia had established his headquarters at Damascus and founded a new dynasty, known as the Omayyads. By appointing his son as successor he kept the caliphate in his family, breaking in this way the precedent set by the Arabs at the death of Mohammed, who selected Abu Bakr as first caliph for his fitness and not because of family claims.

Space will not permit of any detailed account of the Omayyad dynasty, which continued until A.D. 750, and then came to an ignominious end. The story of this hundred years is one of intrigue and treachery, of division and discord, of civil strife and tribal feuds. Moslems

must often have been puzzled at the strange change in events. A people, united and loyal, embark upon a great enterprise, and within the first twenty years they are divided among themselves and actually at war with one another in spite of the boasted brotherhood of Islam. Why? When Omar rebuked the Arabs at Jerusalem for their finery he saw that if the Arab faith was not preserved in its purity Islam could not present a united front to the world. As years passed it became increasingly apparent that the countries occupied by Moslems were reacting upon the conquerors, and that the Islamic faith could not be kept in its primitive form outside Arabia.

The Omayyad dynasty was marked by the cruel murder of Hussein, Ali's son, at Kerbela in 680. The Omayyads, fearing any possible rival, slew the last of Ali's sons, hoping thus to make secure the caliphate for their family. As a matter of fact they sowed the seeds of their own destruction. The claims of the family of Ali to the caliphate now took definite shape, and the great schism in Islam of the Shiah dates from this period.

It was during the Omayyad dynasty too that the first invasion of Europe took place. Akbar, as we have seen, had reached the Atlantic Ocean, but there he was checked for lack of boats. Spurring his horse into the sea, he exclaimed, "Great God! if my course were not stopped by this sea I would still go on to the unknown kingdoms of the West, preaching the unity of Thy Holy Name and putting to the sword the rebellious nations who worship any other gods but Thee."¹

It was not until the year 716 that the Arabs were able, for the first time, to cross over to Europe. Strangely enough, the initiative in the first instance came from Europe itself. A local dispute in Spain led Count Julian to seek an interview with the Arab general; the Arabs were invited by a Spaniard to invade Spain! Ships were

¹ Quoted in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. v. p. 358.

provided by this rebel, and the Caliph consented to a small expedition crossing the Straits of Gibraltar to explore. The attack on Europe was therefore only a raid. The Arabs plundered Algeciras and then returned to Africa.

A revolt in Spain the following year gave the Arabs the opportunity they sought ; an army of seven thousand under Tarik landed near the rock, ever since known as Gibraltar, or Gabel Tarik, the rock of Tarik. King Roderick gathered his forces to drive out the invaders, and the battle lasted for a whole week. The Moslem victory was complete. Roderick fled, and was never heard of again. Spain, divided by inter-dissensions and without a king, was at the mercy of the Arabs. Toledo and Cordova fell. Fresh troops were sent over from Africa, and the Arabs began seriously to invade Europe. Some years were spent in consolidating the victories in Spain, and in A.D. 732 the Moslems overran the land as far as Poitiers. At this critical juncture, when it seemed as though nothing could prevent the Moslems from capturing France, Charles Martel came to the rescue. The armies met between Poitiers and Tours. The fate of Christendom was in the balance. The Arabs fought with all their wonted bravery and stubbornness, but they were entirely routed—and Europe was saved. This was one of the decisive battles of history. It was fought exactly one hundred years after the death of the Prophet.

The Moslems had made a victorious march for more than a thousand miles from Gibraltar to the banks of the Loire ; Arab detachments had penetrated as far as Lyons. The French population had fled in panic before the hordes of dusky desert warriors. The churches had been stripped of their treasures by the Arabs and burnt to the ground. Islam seemed to be on the crest of a new wave of victory when they were defeated at Tours. What would another drive of a second thousand miles have meant to Europe ? It would have carried the Moslems to the borders of Poland or to the Highlands of Scotland. The Arab fleet

that proved so irresistible to the Greek ships in the Mediterranean might have sailed up the Thames, and as Gibbon puts it, "Perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mohammed."¹

From such a calamity were Europe and Christendom delivered by the skill and bravery of one man, Charles Martel. In this battle the nations of Asia, Africa, and Europe met in conflict for much more than the conquest of Spain. They strove for the domination of the world. Two rival civilizations and two opposing religions were locked in deadly combat. Whatever the issue had been the history of the world would have been altered. Had Islam prevailed western nations would have passed to an Arab domination, and the inertia that always followed Arab rule would have condemned Europe to a sterile decay and left it blighted by the dead hand of an illiterate and reactionary Islam. It is no mere flight of fancy to imagine that in this event, instead of St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, we should have had great mosques with minarets instead of spires, and the muezzins' call to prayer in the place of church bells. Had Islam prevailed it is doubtful whether there would have been any British empire at all. The overthrow of Islam saved Europe and altered the whole history of the world. The Arabs never resumed their attacks on France, and they were rapidly driven out of the Pyrenees.

It might have been expected that so great a conqueror would be amply rewarded by a grateful Church and state. But Charles Martel had had to apply the revenues of the bishops and clergy to meet his war commitments and to pay his soldiers. His bravery was soon forgotten and his sacrilege alone remembered. When, later on, his tomb was opened, spectators declared that they were frightened by a smell of fire and the vision of a horrible dragon.

¹ Quoted in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. v. p. 399.

Later generations were entertained with stories of Charles Martel, the damned, in the abyss of hell !

A limit had now been set to the expansion of Islam in the West. For the next seven hundred years the Arabs held Spain and it was not until towards the end of the fifteenth century that Spain freed herself from the Moslem yoke and drove the enemy out of the country.

The Arabs, although they ruled in Spain for so long, never succeeded in assimilating the Christian population to Islam. Thousands became Moslems ; yet when the invaders were expelled, they left behind no permanent religious force. In other countries Islam changed the religion, language, and customs of people, and the new faith became indigenous, so that it flourished whether Arabs ruled or not. In Spain this was not so, and the Spanish people in course of time threw off all allegiance to Islam and returned to the Catholic fold. The reasons for this are many. The popularity of the Moslem rulers had been only superficial ; although they often conferred great benefits upon the country by their wise administration and patronage of learning, yet Arab rule was a despotism which could only be maintained by the sword.

Even if the Spaniards had not by force of arms reconquered Spain the Moorish empire must have fallen to pieces, as Moslem empires in other lands have done, from internal dissensions. Thus on the pages of history, as regards Moslem communities and nations, it is written large, " There is no brotherhood in Islam." ¹

The wars in Spain were a race conflict, and the Spanish pride of race made Moslem assimilation ultimately impossible. The Church of Spain from the first day of invasion had been the implacable foe of Islam. When the Moslems were overthrown it was the Church that rooted out all traces of Islam. Moslems were given the choice of baptism or exile, and as late as 1610 half a million of them

¹ *Moslem Conquests in Spain*, Canon Sell, pp. 98-9.

were deported to Africa and other lands. One feature that has characterized the Spanish Church has been its proselytizing zeal. When Islam in Spain was strongest and apostasy was punishable by death, there was a steady stream of Christian martyrs who preached the Christian faith to Moslems as well as to Christians, and even in those days of Moslem ascendancy there were converts from the Arabs to Christianity.¹

When at the end of the fifteenth century Granada was captured, the Archbishop's first thought was for the conversion of the Moslems, and he began to learn Arabic with a view to preaching to the Arabs. The Gospels were translated into Arabic. There was a virility about the Christian faith in Spain that withstood the shock of Islam, and ultimately succeeded in winning back those who in the days of Arab rule had left the Christian fold.

The defeat of the Arabs was followed by internal strife in the Arab ranks. Jealousies split a once united Islam into factions, each of which adopted a colour as its badge. The Fatimites took green, the Omayyads white, and the Abbasides black. The members of each party wore turbans of their own colour. From the Indus to the Euphrates the Moslem world was convulsed by the wars between the whites and the blacks. The bitter struggle was conducted with a merciless cruelty until the glory of the Omayyad dynasty was submerged in defeat and slaughter. The victorious Abbasides exterminated the most distant branches of the Omayyad family, and a new era dawned upon the fortunes of Islam.

With the passing of the Omayyad dynasty we mark the limits of the Arab empire. Hitherto the caliphs had been acknowledged throughout the Moslem world, and a semblance of unity had been maintained; but with the advent of the Abbaside dynasty in 750, Arab unity was lost for ever. The Arabs in Spain and Africa, with the exception of Egypt, refused allegiance to the new caliphs. Islam was

¹ Cf. *Moslem Conquests in Spain*, Canon Sell, p. 41.

broken into fragments, and countries under Moslem rule became independent. The Omayyads had owed their position to the support of the Syrians and Arabs, and the Abbasides overthrew them with the help of Persia and Khorasan.

The Abbasides transferred the seat of authority from Damascus to the newly founded city of Baghdad, and with the growing Persian influence many changes came into Islam. The culture of Persia made itself felt and softened the hard and rigid attitude of Arab Islam.

One of the first acts of the new Caliph was to invite all members of the Omayyad family to a banquet in Palestine. About ninety persons attended it under a promise of amnesty. In the middle of the feast a signal was given and every guest was slain. Horrible cruelties were perpetrated, and resistance to the new regime was stamped out by wholesale slaughter and massacres.¹

The Abbaside dynasty ruled in Baghdad from A.D. 750 to 1258. The old Arab simplicity had now completely disappeared, and the courts of the caliphs were the wonder of the world. Their magnificent splendour and the munificence of the royal bounty have been extolled in many books. Haroun al-Raschid surrounded himself with doctors, philosophers, poets, and men of learning, and the poor and indigent thronged around the palace to share in the daily largesse from the royal table.

Intermittent fighting was kept up with the Greeks, but no further expansion through the Bosphorus took place. In the West the bounds had been fixed at the Pyrenees. The caliphate was the centre of every kind of intrigue and conspiracy. At one time or another there were rebellions in practically every part of the Caliph's dominions, and the Arab method of solving a problem by assassination was the generally accepted rule. The remarkable thing is that in spite of internal troubles, few of the subject races succeeded in gaining independence from Islam. The caliphs,

¹ Cf. William Muir, *The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline, and Fall*, p. 440.

although beset by many difficulties, maintained most of their possessions intact, or they were held by some Moslem ruler who locally ruled with or without allegiance to Baghdad. Asia Minor made repeated efforts to drive out the Arabs but without avail. The old fighting qualities of the Arabs rose to the top in every emergency when danger threatened from outside. But a gradual decline of the martial spirit was noticeable in the latter part of this dynasty, and with the coming of the Mongols and the capture of Baghdad in A.D. 1258, the great Abbaside dynasty came to an end. The Caliph and his family were put to death by the Mongols, and thus suffered the same fate that the founders of the dynasty had meted out to the Omayyads five centuries before.

The caliphate, as it had been understood hitherto, now came to an end. As long as the desert Arabs ruled in Islam the purity of the faith was maintained. In the Omayyad times we have seen how social life and customs changed. The real Arab eventually returned to his fastnesses in the desert. Troops were levied in Syria, and Islam adapted itself to its new environment. In the Abbaside period Persian influence affected both the spiritual and intellectual life of Islam.

The caliphs were frequently men of toleration who sought to gather round them the best intellects of the day, irrespective of creed or race, but this cultural development in Islam must be left to another chapter.

With the sack of Baghdad in 1258 another period of Moslem history comes to a close. Spain was now ruled by a separate caliph. North Africa was independent of caliphate control, though firmly held by the Moslems. Egypt was a separate power under the rule of a Shiah caliph of her own. Persia was a Shiah kingdom. The Moslem empire as a unity had passed away, and a new force had appeared which was destined to alter for all time the fortunes of Islam. The Mongols occupied Persia and Baghdad. The Turks invaded and captured Asia

Minor, and Egypt passed under the control of Turkish Mamelukes. The centre of power passed out of the hands of the Arabs to the Turks, so that henceforth the destiny of Islam was bound up with Turkey. Arabia sank back into its old isolation, and politically ceased to exist as a world power. It remained the religious home of the faithful, and the pilgrimage gave it a sanctity and a prestige of which nothing could rob it. The Arabs fell back into the same tribal system as in pre-Moslem days and the old predatory instincts prevailed as one Moslem tribe raided another. Islamic unity in Arabia disappeared altogether, and beyond the change of faith and a marked fanaticism among the people little was to be seen as the fruits of Islam. There was no cultural development. Illiteracy prevailed everywhere, and the country stagnated for the next seven hundred years.

We have seen how the Moslem power under the first four caliphs was a religious-political association of Arab tribes knit together by a common faith, and fired with a zeal which found ample scope in the plunder and conquest offered to those who fought in the way of the Lord. Islam could not have held the Arabs together had it not played upon the characteristics of the people and offered them untold wealth in the world beyond Arabia. The people who had eked out a precarious livelihood in the desert where starvation frequently faced them found themselves the masters of rich lands. A survey of Arabia then and since shows how little this new wealth improved the lot of the Arabs. For a time life was easy and the people lived on their booty. But no development took place in Arabia. The country did not benefit by the sacking of the richest towns of Persia, and ultimately, when spoils were used up, the country was left as poor as ever. After one battle alone the booty was estimated at a million pounds sterling. Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, Africa, and Persia were stripped of their wealth. A survey of these countries shows that while the Arabs, who accumulated enormous

wealth, ultimately drifted into poverty again, yet the countries despoiled and robbed recovered, and within a few generations were again more prosperous than the land they had enriched.

Islam, as we have seen, was checked at the Pyrenees in 732. The Arabs failed to take Constantinople, and Asia Minor became the limits of expansion in that direction. The pagan tribes in Africa successfully prevented any penetration into the heart of the continent. It may truthfully be said that Islam in the first instance spread by conquest and not through the more peaceful method of religious propaganda. The lesson history teaches on the spread of Mohammedanism is that without the sword as an ally it is improbable that it would have ever been heard of much beyond the frontiers of Arabia. While it must be admitted that, after the early expansion of the faith through the "Holy Wars," Islam made millions of converts, yet it should not be forgotten that these converts were almost always made in countries where Islam was the dominant political and ruling power. With a Moslem ruler over a non-Moslem people pressure was brought to bear easily upon them, and the process of Islamization went on for centuries: but always where Islam had by wars and bloodshed previously established its authority. Alkindy, an Arab Christian at the court of Baghdad, in A.D. 830 challenged the Moslems to show a case of a single conversion to Islam for any reason other than that of some powerful material inducement.

The spread of Islam through its victorious armies may make a glorious record from a military point of view, but the test of the faith depends upon what happened afterwards in the occupied countries. Did they take on a new lease of life and advance in civilization, art, or literature? History shows that from the advent of Islam in any country a state of torpor and stagnation sets in. Where revival of learning took place it was due not to the Arab genius, but to the culture of the country occupied. The

reason for this is that Islam, however suited to Arabia, was not the faith that could raise the world. However much it met the needs of seventh-century Arab life it carried no permanent message suited to other ages or other lands. The history of Arabia shows too that in the home of the faith Islam has signally failed to raise appreciably the cultural and moral level of the people. The Arabs to-day, where untouched by western influences, are still living the same life, unchanged, as in the seventh century, and are very little less illiterate.

CHAPTER V

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ISLAM

WE have seen Islam, Arab in origin and conception, projected with amazing speed into the outside world. Moslem armies not only conquered these lands—they stayed to govern them. If the sword was freely used in battle something more potent than arms was at work. The Moslem invader took with him the Koran, a creed, a code of morals and ethics, and in fact a complete scheme for the government of the world in political, religious, and social matters. How great was the influence of Islam is seen by a survey of these same lands to-day. The whole of North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Persia are predominantly Moslem, while India boasts a Moslem population of about seventy millions. The ancient Eastern Churches are but a fragment of the population, and in areas once entirely Christian, Moslems now outnumber Christians many times, and the minority question is almost entirely a Christian question.

Many reasons have been given for this remarkable spread of Islam. In earlier days the usual answer given was that the sword was the compelling influence. There is no doubt that the sword did play a great part in the initial stages of this movement. Persecution and political pressure are put forward as reasons, and a case can be made out to show that the disabilities under which Christians and others lived under Moslem rule did lead many to adopt Islam. But this sort of reason does not completely explain why Islam not only spread but consolidated its gains in so many lands. The simplicity of the Moslem creed and the absence of theological metaphysics were a solid asset in the appeal

of Islam to popular imagination. The easy moral code which allowed polygamy, made divorce simple, and sought to regard human nature as it found it, and not as it ought to be, made the new faith easy of acceptance to many who lived in a dissolute age.

Sufficient emphasis has not been placed in this connection perhaps upon the appeal of Arab life, free and independent, to people who lived under a corrupt autocracy. The Arabs stood for liberty and self-government in their own land, and it was natural for other races to assume that they would stand for the same policy of independence in other lands too. The Constantinople government was decadent, inefficient, and corrupt, it is true, but it was also undiluted autocracy, and class hatred was a marked feature of the age. The subject races of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt hailed the Arabs as deliverers from the hated rule of the Greeks. The responsibility for the overthrow of the Christian Church lies not so much upon the sword of Mohammed as upon the worldly ecclesiastical leaders of the day. Many of the monasteries were a crying scandal. The clergy were themselves corrupt, and they sided with the heads of a decaying empire against the poor and the oppressed. The schism between the Eastern Churches and Rome, the hair-splitting controversies over creeds and dogma, made men sigh for a simpler faith; and when Islam appeared it found a prepared soil for the seed of the Koran, a people discontented and ready to seize any chance to bring about a change of government; it was small wonder that in many cases they made common cause with the invaders against their Greek rulers, who to them were more foreign than the Arabs.

Later on, as people came to see that Arab democracy did not mean democracy for non-Moslem races too, they learned the true meaning of Islam. As Moslem law superseded the old laws it became apparent that the new rulers were as autocratic as the old, and rebellion broke out, but it was then too late. The power of Islam was too strong to be broken, and there followed centuries of assimilation,

during which period Islam sought to absorb the non-Moslem populations of the conquered countries.

In the previous chapter we followed the story of the rapid expansion of Islam east and west; we now turn to study the influence of Islam upon the thought, life, and culture of the peoples who suddenly came under Moslem rule. Islam won the allegiance of many differing races. It cut across age-long traditions, imposed, in some cases, a new culture upon people, changed religious beliefs; so remarkable has been its influence that millions of people in conquered countries are to-day as proud of the name of Islam as if they had been born under the shadow of the sacred Kaaba at Mecca.

Foremost among the assets Islam had for the extension of the faith was the Koran. The Arabs valued the gift of eloquence and a perfect skill in the use of their language. Orators were men of great influence in Arabia, and in verse they appealed to the people on a crisis in their affairs. Mohammed made full use of his oratorical power. For his appeals he claimed a divine inspiration, and his exhortations and commands were said to be dictated by the angel Gabriel. He spoke in prose, yet each sentence ended in a long rhyme, which in Arabic gives the Koran a charm entirely lost in its translation into other languages. At the Prophet's death the Koran was partly an oral tradition and partly written in scattered fragments. A band of "readers" was formed whose duty it was to memorize the Koran. In the Battle of Yemama, A.D. 632, many of these readers were killed, and Omar, fearing for the loss of the Koran, appealed to the Caliph to collect the sacred text into book form.

A beginning was then made. Zeid Ibn Thabit, a man who had been amanuensis to the Prophet, was given the task of gathering all the material together; he set to work to collect it "from date leaves and tablets, on white stone, and from the breasts of men."¹ Many of the chapters now

¹ See Sale's *Koran*, p. 32.

in the Koran were already in use in public services ; Zeid gathered all that he could find and formed a first manuscript of the Koran which was committed to the care of one of Mohammed's widows, Omar's daughter, Haphsa. By the reign of Othman (651) there were many and serious differences in the Koran as it was used in different parts of the Moslem empire, and the Caliph was urged to restore the unity of the divine book ! Copies of the Koran in use were called in, and a body of experts was appointed to collate these with the text in the custody of Haphsa.

A one-standard text was now adopted, variations were reconciled and authoritative copies were written out and deposited at Mecca, Medina, Kufa, and Damascus. All former editions were committed to the flames and the revised text was issued as the one and only Koran, verbally inspired and sent down by God to Mohammed as a light and a guide for Islam.

In spite of the boasted divine origin of the Koran, the most outstanding feature of it is that it is a thoroughly human book. It throbs with the aims, ideals, hopes, passions, and faults of a very human man. It is because of this that the Koran when recited never fails to touch a chord in other human hearts. Family disputes are mixed up with teaching on the Deity. Contradictions are accounted for by the simple theory of abrogation. Through all are woven stories from the Old Testament which give substance to the book and form ready points of contact with peoples of other lands. Time and again Christian teaching is brought in, and the reverence paid by Mohammed to the Prophets and to our Lord gave many people in other lands the impression that, after all, there was not much difference between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. In considering the appeal of Islam to the Christian world we should remember that Mohammed acknowledged the Virgin Birth of our Lord, and His sinlessness. He accepted as a fact the record of miracles, and added to them from apocryphal sources. He gave a place of great honour to the

Virgin herself, and he took over much of the nomenclature of Christian theology. The central fact of Islam—the Unity of God—is derived from Jewish sources. The eclectic nature of Moslem theology gave the Moslems common ground in their impact upon other people, and there is no doubt that in the ignorant and divided state of Christendom of those days many people thought Mohammed to be rather a reformer of a Puritan type than the founder of a faith aiming at the overthrow of Christianity.

A study of the Koran shows that there is little original thought and teaching in it. The bulk of it is from well-known sources. The originality, as we have seen, lies in the genius of the man who, out of the welter of creeds, produced a harmonious whole based upon pure monotheism. It took on an Arab colour; and the conception of Islam as a universal religion, with a social system of its own, is Arab through and through. It is a remarkable fact, as will be shown later, that it is just this Arab contribution to Islam that some in Moslem lands are seeking to shed to-day. The Pan-Islamic ideals are giving place to national self-determination, and the theocracy of Mohammed is being replaced by constitutional forms of government.

What we see therefore projected into the outside world is a faith built up from Jewish, Christian, and other sources, clothed in an Arab garb, with an Arab political and social background. The background frequently faded from the picture, the Arab garb was often forgotten, and the non-Moslem world came into contact with a composite faith much of which was already familiar to the people. Islam as it expanded met the mystical East in Persia and India. It threw itself into the midst of Hellenic thought and life in the Near East, and in Europe it faced organized armies and a people just emerging into nationhood. In each case Islam found expression in different ways. The mode of expression ultimately depended upon the culture of the people thus Islamized.

The simplicity of the Arab caliphs was exchanged for the pomp, luxury, and wealth of eastern potentates. Caliphs drank wine in violation of the laws of the Koran. The empire of Islam fell to pieces, and in the Middle Ages Islam was, from a military point of view, weak and divided. It is a curious coincidence, and yet more than a coincidence, that in a period when the empire was divided and warring against itself there sprang up at the same time a new liberty of thought, a wide tolerance towards other religions, and a search for truth, whether it was to be found in Islam or not.

As Islam took root east and west it established Arabic as a *lingua franca* for the new Moslem empire. There are few similar cases in history where a conquering army has so completely imposed a foreign language upon peoples of different races as to make it ultimately the mother tongue of the people whose lands had been captured. So much so is this the case that in a land like Egypt the people, both the Mohammedans and the Christians, to-day speak a common language; but it is Arabic, not Coptic, and although Coptic is still used for liturgical purposes it is not understood by the people, and is to all intents and purposes a dead language. Arabic is spoken to-day throughout Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Sudan, as far south as the Kordofan Province, and along the North Africa coast to the Straits of Gibraltar. It is taught in the schools of Nigeria, Zanzibar, Cape Town, Madagascar, in India, and in China.

Arabic is spoken to-day in some form or other by about seventy million people, and probably as many more know something of its literature in the Koran.

In the Philippine Islands the first chapter of the Koran is repeated before dawn paints the sky red. The refrain is taken up in Moslem prayers at Peking and is repeated across the whole of China. It is heard in the valleys of the Himalayas and on "the roof of the world." A few hours later the Persians pronounce these Arabic words and

then across the Peninsula the muezzins call the "faithful" to prayer. At the waters of the Nile the cry "Allaha Akbar" is again sounded forth, ever carrying the Arabic speech westward across the Sudan, the Sahara, and the Barbary States, until it is last heard in the mosques of Morocco.¹

Emphasis has been placed upon the asset that the Greek language was to our faith in the early days of Christianity; but in Islam we have the astonishing fact of a people who took their language with them, imposed it with a new faith on alien peoples, and made it the common tongue of millions who formerly spoke other and widely different languages. As Islam spread, so Arabic became essential. It is the language of the Koran, and because of this it is considered to be *the* language, superior to all others, the medium of divine revelation and the language of heaven. The halo of glory cast around Arabic probably did more than anything to establish Islam in non-Arab lands. It formed a link for the student with Europe in the West and India in the East. Books written in Arabic could be circulated in every part of the Moslem world and readily translated into languages beyond the control of Islam. In this way, Arab influence through language spread into Europe, and at the same time touched the life of India and Persia.

The Arabs, unimaginative and stolid, found themselves thrown among peoples of a widely different mentality. Christianity, some one has said, never spread to any great extent among the Bedouin because it was too complicated. But there is another reason and a more potent one. Christianity in Arabia had refused to compromise with Arab superstitions, its polygamy, and Kaaba-worship. Mohammed reduced everything to the simplest possible creed based upon his conception of God, which is that of an almighty Arab. His system of religion was a compromise with custom and superstition. The Kaaba was retained

¹ S. M. Zwemer, *Arabia, the Cradle of Islam*, p. 238.

as a sacred shrine, polygamy was sanctioned, and the Bedouin found that by dropping their many gods for Allah they could retain almost everything else that had previously gone to make up the content of their lives. From Moses to Christ all the prophets had fought against the vices of their people, but here was a man who based his claim to a divine mission upon the success of his arms. "Might is right" was his creed, and he freely exploited in the cause of Islam the evil and vicious instincts of the Arabs.

These Arabs, with their love of loot, were at an early stage called upon to rule an empire. In Damascus they were soon fascinated by the new modes of life with which they came into contact ; Byzantine civilization created in these sons of the desert a love of pleasure and luxury, and it was small wonder that the glory of Mecca and Medina faded from their view as they threw themselves into the gaiety of a new life. They were brought into touch with the philosophy of the day, Hellenism in Syria and Latinism in Spain, and they jumped at one stride from the barbarism of Arabia into the civilization of the West. A nice problem here presents itself. Islam projected in this way into the West had two possibilities before it. Either it might become so completely assimilated to the faith and philosophy of the West as to lose virtually its own individuality ; in doing so it would march with the civilized world in progress and advancement. Or, it might so maintain its Arab identity as to prevent any complete assimilation, and, in consequence, by stamping out progressive thought, adhere to a strict orthodoxy.

The history of Islam moves in cycles. For a time tolerance and liberal thought dominated policy, and Arab fanaticism was swept aside. The Islamized countries of the East and West made their contribution to a new learning that was radiant with hope for the future. But such a cycle ended in reaction when Arab orthodoxy gained the upper hand and stagnation followed the suppression of any liberal tendencies.

Such a cycle was the period of the Omayyad dynasty in Damascus. The old Arab party in Medina saw that power was passing out of their hands into that of the Syrians in Damascus, and the struggle that followed was between Syrian civilization and Arab mentality. The Syrians, readily adapting themselves to Islam and the changed circumstances of the Moslem occupation, took up the task of educating their invaders.

The Arabs made little effort to resist the temptation to imitate the Syrians, and to the creed of Islam they added the doctrine that happiness is the highest good. Caliphs believed just enough about God and His Prophet to be termed Moslems, but the strict observance of Mohammed's commands was thrown to the wind. Arabia, which up to now had been the home of the elect, was treated with contempt and made a province subject to the rule of Damascus. The stories of Moslem life in Damascus shocked the Arabs of Medina who, through loss of prestige and anxiety for the faith, rebelled against the Omayyads. An army marched south and captured Medina ; the tables were indeed turned when the sacred city, from which the troops had poured to the sack of cities in Syria, was given up to three days' plunder and rapine by the Damascus caliph. The mosque containing the tomb of Mohammed was converted into a stable for horses. Moslems of Syria drove their co-religionists in Medina into slavery and the Arabs tasted something of the bitter sorrow which they had caused to so many peoples in other lands. What happened in Syria occurred in many lands. The Arabs, incapable of ruling alone, came under the control of the Islamized elements of the countries conquered. But the hand of Islam was a dead hand and in spite of local control progress through the Mohammedan system became impossible. Had the Arabs penetrated into France in A.D. 732, that country would today probably have been at the level of a Turkish province.

The rule of Damascus became increasingly unpopular until in a revolt in the year 750 the Omayyad dynasty, as

we have seen, came to an ignominious end. The cycle had completed itself. The reactionary forces of Arabia had allied themselves with the descendants of Abbas, an uncle of Mohammed, in the hope of re-establishing the primitive faith. A new cycle now began under the Abbaside dynasty which, instead of justifying the hopes of Medina, was soon to prove itself more modern than the Damascus regime had been.

The Abbaside caliphate, centred in Baghdad (A.D. 750-1256), is renowned throughout the world for its patronage of art, literature, science, and philosophy. We have already seen that the Arab caliphs stood for Islam in its simplicity and purity, and that the Omayyad caliphs of Damascus had built up an Islamic empire with a common language throughout; in the Abbaside dynasty we immediately discover startling changes making their appearance. If the Omayyad period showed the influence of Syria upon Arab life, the Abbaside regime in a greater degree marked the impact of philosophical thought and non-Arab culture upon Islam itself. The mental lethargy of a deadening orthodoxy was thrown off and caliphs, freed from the anxiety of perpetual war, found leisure for study. Science attracted the attention of Al Mansour (A.D. 754), who applied himself, among other things, to astronomy. In Mamun's reign (813) a new era began, which has aptly been described as "the Augustan period of Arabian letters."¹ Mamun himself had been influenced by Persian thought and his sympathies were strongly with the Shiah sect. His reign was marked by a wide measure of tolerance. He even allowed Christians the liberty of discussion on the respective claims of Christianity and Islam. He surrounded himself with scholars of all schools of thought. Learned discussions took place in his presence. He held the doctrine of free will as opposed to predestination. His views on the Koran were regarded as heretical, for although he accepted its inspiration he believed it to be "created."

¹ Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 266.

The orthodox opinion is that the Koran is "uncreate and eternal." The court in those days was one of brilliant splendour. Men of science and letters, poets, physicians, and philosophers were munificently entertained, and differences of creed were no barrier to royal preferment, for Jews and Christians were equally welcomed to the court. An observatory on the plains of Tadmor was used for the study of astronomy. It was through the labour of men of learning at the court of Mamun that Europe learned again something of their heritage in Greek science and philosophy.¹

Mamun's agents in Constantinople, Armenia, Syria, and Egypt collected volumes of Greek science which were translated into Arabic, and Moslem writers to-day claim, with a good deal to be said for their point of view, that the European Renaissance really began under the Arab revival of learning and not in the fifteenth century. They assert that Spain and Baghdad under Moslem rule, not Italy, were the cradle of the rebirth of Europe. The point is one of more than historical interest, since Moslems argue from this that Islam, as a system, stands for liberty, science, and literature in their widest sense. It is true to say that there has been nothing in Islamic history, before or since, comparable to the Abbaside period. It stands by itself, unique and brilliant, but thoroughly unorthodox and in many ways untrue to Islamic traditions and teaching.

Moslems entered a new and unknown world when they came into contact with Greek literature. Nestorian Christians had maintained a high standard of general education and had preserved much of Hellenic medical science. In the Omayyad times most of the doctors in the Moslem empire were Nestorians, many of whom professed Islam. They had preserved Aristotle's writings and a wide mathematical literature. Their being Moslem was a convenience rather than a conviction. Their scientific knowledge, which was in no sense Arab, was made available to the

¹ William Muir, *The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline, and Fall*, pp. 509-14.

Moslem world through the patronage which the caliphs gave to learning. It was, therefore, non-Arab thought—Greek, Christian, Jewish, and Indian—that was reacting on Islam. Vast libraries were collected, and an army of writers employed in copying manuscripts.

When we remember that Arabic-speaking scholars were in every main centre from Baghdad to Cordova, we shall at once see how great was the influence of Baghdad in the spread of the new learning. With Arabic as a medium, scholars in the Far East and in Europe were brought into the centre of a great renaissance, in which they quickly took up with zest the study of a literature that opened up endless vistas before them. Thus we find the movement spreading through Persia, affecting Moslem thought in the Near East, gathering new strength in Spain, and influencing life in Europe. This was only possible because the caliphs set the example of broad tolerance and liberality towards those of other faiths. Ibn Khallikan says, "It is related that Mansur [the second Abbaside caliph] wished to convert a Christian, who said, 'In the faith of my fathers I will die; where they are I wish to be, whether in heaven or in hell.' Whereupon the Caliph laughed and dismissed him with a rich present."¹

It was this kindly tolerance that made possible the investigation of truth for truth's sake. The translations of many Greek authors initiated the Arabs into the scientific discoveries of antiquity, but this was not due to Arab genius, for the inspiration of the whole movement came from other sources, mainly Greek. The influence of Jews in Spain, and of Persian scholars, and the contacts with Sanskrit literature and Indian ideas were largely responsible for the new thought. Out of this movement sprang the great educational centres of Baghdad, Bosra, Cairo, and Cordova. They began as religious institutions, based on the mosques, but they developed into great universities—the light of which shone far beyond the frontiers of Islam.

¹ E. Sell, *Umayyad and Abbased Khalifates*, pp. 65-6.

No distinction of class was allowed, and the nobleman's son studied side by side with the artisan. Liberal allowances of food were made to poor scholars and tuition was free. Christian students were attracted to these centres of learning and were admitted on an equal footing with Moslems. Moslem scholars, building on Greek mathematicians, first used the decimal notation. Algebra is practically their creation. They developed spherical trigonometry. In physics they invented the pendulum. They made progress in astronomy, built observatories and astronomical instruments, some of which are still in use. In medicine they made great advances on the Greeks. Their surgeons, it is claimed,¹ understood the use of anæsthetics, and they made considerable progress in chemistry. They studied philosophy. In manufactures they excelled in beauty of design and workmanship. They knew the secrets of dyeing, and they manufactured paper. They scoured the universe for knowledge, and made it available to the whole world. To these centres of learning men of varied races and different beliefs were attracted. They were given complete freedom in research, and in their philosophy heresy, from the Islamic point of view, was more popular than orthodoxy which, for the time being, was completely in the background.

The sword of Islam was sheathed as the youth of the Moslem world was drawn away from camp and battle to college and university.

A curious illustration of the influence of Islamic thought upon mediæval life is to be found in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where the setting of the Inferno has its counterpart in the religious tales of Islam. A single verse in the Koran (chap. 17, 1) says: "Praise be to Him who called upon His servant to travel by night from the sacred temple (of Mecca) to the far-off temple (of Jerusalem)." Out of this allusion sprang a crop of legends telling of Mohammed's journey in a single night from Mecca to

¹ See H. G. Wells, *Outline of History*, p. 336.

Jerusalem and his ascent to heaven. Dante's poem contains many points of contact with these legends. In each there is the story of a night journey. In each, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise are visited in succession, and both stories conclude with a vision of the throne of God. There is a striking similarity between the Islamic legends and Dante's description of Paradise. The part played in the Moslem story by Gabriel, who acts as guide and adviser to Mohammed, is assigned by Dante to Beatrice. Gabriel instructs Mohammed to thank God for allowing him to visit heaven, and Beatrice, in the tenth canto of the *Paradise*, says, "Give thanks to the sun of the angels who of his grace hath to this sun of sense exalted thee." Dante's problems of theology find a counterpart in Mohammed's ascension and the instructions given to him by the angel. Perhaps the most striking resemblance, however, is to be found in the story of the ladder set up from Jerusalem to heaven by which Mohammed ascended. It glittered with gold, silver, and precious stones. Angels stood on either side of it, and Mohammed travelled the whole journey in less time than it takes to relate.¹ The twenty-first and twenty-second cantos of the *Paradise* also tell of a golden ladder that leads to the celestial spheres. Beatrice calls upon Dante to ascend by this ladder and he reaches the top "in less time than it would take to withdraw the hand from fire."

So far as its framework is concerned, the *Inferno* is a very fair copy of the Moslem hell. The picture of the Inferno, its shape, structure, and the people consigned to

¹ In the Christmas number, 1926, of the *Bookman*, Mgr. William Barry, D.D., says, "The Expedition to Spain of a man like St Francis yields a welcome glimpse of the intercourse between Christians and Islamites which proved to be a step in the world's progress. We know how much St Thomas, the angelic doctor, was indebted to Spanish-Arabic sources for his acquaintance with Greek philosophy, and we have learned of late to our astonishment that the whole plan and structure of Dante's greatest work were borrowed from Islamic legends dealing with Mohammed's ascent to heaven on the night of power."

t, is a replica of the grim torments appointed in the Moslem hell to the wicked. The two pictures of heaven have striking resemblances also. Dante meets in heaven two women from his native city well known to him, and in the same way Mohammed meets two women : in both legends the women make themselves known to the travellers and leave them dumb with admiration at their beauty. It may, of course, be argued that all this is mere coincidence, but there is considerable evidence to show that both stories are represented by the same symbols, and both give similar details, and both are clothed in the same artistic form. So striking are the similarities that one is driven to the conclusion that there exists between the two stories a literary connection. Is this possible ? we ask. The answer lies in what we know of the communications between Islam and Europe in the Middle Ages. Commerce forged a powerful link between Christianity and Islam, and by the eleventh century Italian traders had settled in all the Moslem ports of the Mediterranean. The pilgrimages prior to the Crusades were a second point of contact ; Moslem books acquired by Christian pilgrims found their way into Europe and were translated by scholars into the languages of the West.

The Crusades meant a great deal more than simply the clash of creeds and wars of aggression. Two civilizations, it is true, contended for the mastery, two faiths were in conflict, and two great races at war ; but the Crusades ultimately helped both Moslems and Christians to see that the only hope for the future lay in a better understanding between Islam and Christianity.

The failure of the Crusades, from the Christian point of view, led some in Europe to establish missions for the conversion of Islam to Christianity, and in the thirteenth century both Franciscans and Dominicans formed new links with Islam by making a thorough study of Arabic and the religious literature of Islam. Raymond Lull, in his advocacy of missions to Moslems, did much to foster

this new learning, and the study of oriental languages in European universities owed much to the co-operation of this man. Through this new study of Islam Moslem theological works found their way into every capital of Europe.

Sicily, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, was under the Norman kings and was composed of a medley of races of differing religions and diverse languages. "The Court of King Roger II at Palermo was formed of both Christians and Moslems who were equally versed in Arabic literature and Greek science. Moslems and Christians lived together in the service of the king. During the long reign of Frederick, King of Sicily, Islamic literature was the most popular study in the country. The king was the patron of learning and gathered together a unique collection of Arabic MSS. which were deposited in the University of Naples, founded by Frederick in A.D. 1224. The works of Aristotle and Averrhoes were translated and copies were sent to Paris and Bologna.

Perhaps the most interesting link of all was the correspondence which passed between the savants of the West and men of learning throughout the Moslem world.

We have already seen how Islam entered Europe through the conquest of Spain. For five hundred years the Moslems had played an important part in the life of Europe. There is no doubt that many of the Spaniards who had Islamized passed on to the rest of Europe the knowledge of Islamic culture.

Trade, commerce, war, literature, and many other things all helped to introduce into mediæval Europe the learning of the Moslem world. The renaissance in Islam had a profound influence upon the life, literature, and theology of the Christian West. Many Christian legends of the tenth century had their origin in earlier traditions of Islam. The folk-lore of Damascus and Baghdad was transmitted to the West, and in a Christian form has found its way into many of our Church legends ; and the

influences of Islam can be traced to-day in some aspects of both Catholic and Protestant theologies.

For the framework of his poem, in which he wrote of sin and judgment and of the purification and final blessedness of the redeemed, Dante drew upon legends, the origin of which was lost in transmission and forgotten as they became a part of the Christianity of the Middle Ages. I wandered once through the long corridors of a large Christian monastery. The walls were adorned with pictures of heaven and hell, and here I saw depicted in a twentieth-century monastery the same old Moslem legends. Not one of the monks would admit that these illustrations had anything to do with Islam, yet they were living in a Moslem country, and a short distance from the gate where I said good-bye to the hospitable old monk who had been my guide, I heard again these Moslem legends from a Mohammedan living almost under the shadow of the monastery.¹

Averrhoes—or to give him his Arab name, Abul Walid Mohammed Ibn Roshd—was born at Cordova about 1149. His father was the *Mufti* (chief judge) of Andalusia. As a young man he threw himself into the new thought and life of his day. He studied philosophy, medicine, jurisprudence, and theology, and became renowned for his learning. His wide range of study and his liberal tendencies made him suspect, and consequently brought him into conflict with orthodox Islam. He taught that God, being the universal cause of everything, is also the author of all human activity, but that man being free either acquires merit or incurs guilt according as he obeys or disobeys the teaching of his religion. He translated the works of Aristotle, whom he regarded as the greatest of

¹ This subject of the influence of Islam in Dante's writings has been exhaustively treated by Mr Miguel Asin in his *Islam and the Divine Comedy*. The author, in a scholarly manner, has collected a great mass of information on the influence of Islam in Europe in the Middle Ages. It is to be hoped that some one will carry the idea a stage further and show in more detail the impact of Moslem thought upon the theology of Christianity.

all philosophers. His writings found their way into Europe in a Latin form and were in turn studied by the schoolmen. Thus we see the penetration of thought from East to West through Arabic. Avempace, another Arabian philosopher, was born in Spain at the close of the eleventh century. He expressed freely the most heterodox views on the Koran and its divine authority, and his studies in logic and natural science were, in Latin translations, much in use in the West.

Avicenna—or Ibn Sina, as he was called—lived in the tenth century and was a native of Bokhara. He wrote about a hundred books, and his writings on medical science, drawn mainly from the works of ancient Greek physicians, were for centuries the standard authority in Europe. Many other names could be given to show how these Moslem scholars came from East and West. Persia, India, Turkestan, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Spain all contributed. They gathered together the broken fragments of an ancient civilization and, through the toleration of the caliphs, they disseminated them throughout the world. Arabia and Mecca contributed little, if anything, to this, and the renaissance did not so much represent Islam as a revolt against the stereotyped form of Arab religion that emanated from the Prophet. Mr H. G. Wells aptly sums up the situation thus :

For a moment we stand amazed at the greatness of the Abbaside dominion ; then suddenly we realize that it is but as a fair husk enclosing the dust and ashes of a dead civilization.

Around the banner of Islam hung the glory of an imperishable civilization, the wealth of an ancient literature, and the heritage of all past ages. The glory was neither eastern nor western, neither Islamic nor Christian. It was the glory of the great men who were seekers after truth.

It must not be imagined that throughout the Abbaside

dynasty orthodox Moslems readily acquiesced in the new liberty and freedom of thought. Many of those who had helped to overthrow the Omayyad rule did so in the hope that Islam would once more be centred in Mecca and become Arab in type again. The demands for a wider liberty had been voiced in Damascus, and to the chagrin of the orthodox the tendencies they had tried to check in Damascus developed and found fruition in Baghdad. From the earliest time there had always been these two parties in Islam: the orthodox, bound to a narrow interpretation of the Koran and the rigidity of dogmas, and the other more liberal party, which sought to enrich Islam by gathering into it the literature of other nations. The conflict continued through the Abbaside period, but the orthodox were silenced, as a rule, by the fact that the work of government was generally entrusted to Greeks and Persians. The orthodox party never gave way: they simply submitted and waited their opportunity.

In the tenth century a new factor in the situation began to appear. Turkish troops had been employed at Baghdad and ultimately assumed authority and power. Abbaside caliph succeeded caliph until Seljuk bin Yakak, a Turkish Emir in Turkestan, became a Moslem and changed once more the fortunes of Islam. As the Abbasides had been identified with liberal thought the new Moslems espoused the orthodox cause. The coming of the Turks and the Mongols put an effective end to the renaissance in the East, while in the West the gradual recapture of Spain by the Christians brought the western phase of it to a close. Islam gradually came under the iron heel of the Turk, orthodoxy reigned supreme, and the light that had shone disappeared again as Arab conceptions of life and a desert outlook upon the world predominated.

We have traced the actions and reactions of Islam in its first impacts upon the outside world. The hell and heaven of Moslem legend found their way into Christianity, but, at the same time as Europe was being profoundly

impressed by Arabic culture, the East too, we have seen, was reacting upon Islam. The Sufis applied a pantheistic form of metaphysics to Islam which, in part, they had inherited from Christian mysticism ; and the idealization of sexual love, so prominent a feature in the picture of the Moslem heaven, turned the gross views of houris in Paradise into a beautiful symbolism and an allegory of the union of the mystical soul with God. While Islam was giving to the West one aspect of faith, it, in turn, was adopting a new colour through the influences of the mystic East.

We have travelled far in these chapters from the day when Mohammed rode on his camel into Medina. The dominant thought then was God in a desert environment, as the Prophet conceived Him. The desert disappears as we watch Islam in Damascus, Baghdad, Cordova, or Persia, and a new connotation is given to "Allah." God means more to Islam after these world contacts because of the enriching influences of non-Moslem thought, and Moslem prestige never stood so high as when it threw off the shackles of Arabia, the restricted outlook of the desert, and sought by a liberal policy to stand for a wide tolerance in religion and for the pursuit of learning untrammelled by the rigid rules of Koran and sheikh. We now turn to the study of these racial influences upon Islam in more detail and to trace out the different aspects of Islam in some of the great areas of the world.

CHAPTER VI

MYSTICISM IN ISLAM

THE conception of God in Islam is summed up in the first half of the creed, "There is no God but God." Moslems believe in a God who created all things in heaven and earth, who upholds all things and decrees all things. God is without beginning or end, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. "He is mighty and powerful, and the heavens are folded in His right hand and all creatures are couched within His grasp." Palgrave sums up the Moslem conception of God thus :

He is ever more prone to punish than to reward, to inflict pain than to bestow pleasure, to ruin than to build. It is His singular satisfaction to let created beings continually feel that they are nothing else than His slaves, His tools, and contemptible tools also, that thus they may the better acknowledge His superiority and know His power to be above their power, His cunning to be above their cunning, His will above their will, His pride above their pride ; or rather that there is no power, cunning, will, or pride save His own. . . . That such was in reality Mohammed's mind and idea is fully confirmed by the witness of contemporary tradition. Of this we have many authentic samples : the commentaries of Baidawi, the *Mishkat-ul-Masabih* and fifty similar works afford ample testimony on this point. . . . Men are thus all on one common level here and hereafter in their physical, social and moral light—the level of slaves to one sole Master, of tools to one universal Agent.¹

Into this unrelieved picture of eastern despotism there

¹ *Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, William Gifford Palgrave, vol. i. p. 366.

come gleams of light, and while the idea of the Deity as autocratic omnipotence is true to Arab beliefs, there are nevertheless mystical elements in the Koran which show the influence of other faiths upon the mind of Mohammed. The following verse from the Koran illustrates this :

God is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth. His Light is like a niche in which is a lamp,—the lamp encased in glass—the glass, as it were, a glistening star. From a blessed tree is it lighted, the olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would well nigh shine out, even though fire touched it not ! It is light upon light (Koran, chap. 24).

Mohammed, in describing the glories of heaven, with its hours and material enjoyments, says that the greatest glory of all will be to behold the face of God. It was a common saying among the Arabs that “ Mohammed is in love with his Maker.”

At the outset two notes are struck. The dread picture of the Almighty striking terror into the hearts of His slaves is relieved by the other note of God in His mercy calling forth from man love, devotion, and service.

Moslems use the word “ ibada ” for worship, a word which expresses the relationship and attitude of a creature as a slave to Allah. Spiritual life in Islam is founded upon the root principle of the lordship of the Creator who, having formed us, owns us and will do as He pleases with us. This relationship demands obedience, and Islam means those surrendered to the will of Allah. Such a conception of God connotes distance between the slave and his Lord. Nowhere in the Koran is there anything to relieve this sense of fear and servitude in the face of omnipotence. The Christian conception of the Fatherhood of God and of men as children of an all-loving Father is entirely absent.

The call to prayer therefore, in Islam, is the demand of the Almighty for a daily specific ceremony, which always

begins with "Allah is great." Spiritual life is fed by the recitation of the Koran, the offering of supplications, the invocation of the names of God and the mention of His attributes. To pray aright the body must first be cleansed, and ablutions are a binding command and a pre-requisite of all prayer. Prescribed worship is a matter of ablutions, genuflections, set acts and utterances. There are two kinds of worship, compulsory and supererogatory. Every Moslem is ordered to pray five times a day. If for any cause the prayers are omitted they must be made up at the first opportunity. If a Moslem intentionally and wilfully neglects to pray the law prescribes the penalty of death. The man is treated by law as an apostate. Under the Hanifi law the penalty is imprisonment until the erring believer has complied with the law. Worship in a Moslem state is compulsory upon all. In Arabia to-day under Wahhabi rule this law is rigidly applied, and Arabs who have refused to pray have been known to lose their lives. In most other Moslem lands, where the fierce Arab type of Islam has been softened, prayer is enjoined as a rule but not enforced by law.

Additional prayers are the performing of worship at other times than the five set periods, and are either in expiation of some sin or for the securing of rewards. It must not be supposed from this that there is no place in Islamic prayer for special requests in time of need. When the prescribed prayer is finished any matter of anxiety can be named in supplication; the blessing and favour of Allah is asked with upraised hands, and the Moslem in this respect is in no way different from the rest of mankind. At any time of day and in any place he may lift up his heart in prayer for help or guidance.

The law may set bounds upon what are considered to be the demands of Allah for worship from His creatures, but the human heart is the same the world over, and Islam at a very early stage began to find expression for the devotional life along other lines and altogether outside

the prescribed acts of worship. The set forms of prayer given by Mohammed did not meet the needs of suffering humanity. They gave the creature the slave position, where he was told to accept all that came, good or ill, as part of the inscrutable will of Allah. But this is exactly what human beings have never been able to do. Spiritual aspirations were not met by praying a set formula five times a day, and the problem of suffering found no answer in the fatalism of the Koran. The heart cried out for something more.

The distance between the Creator and the creature had to be bridged somehow, and Islam, as conceived in an Arab brain, had failed to do this. Contacts with other faiths and cultures immediately began to supply what was lacking, and the spiritual life found expression in many new ways as Moslems learned of the immanence of God and the possibilities of fellowship with the Divine.

In the early days of Islam sincere men were overwhelmed with a dread of the Judgment Day and the torments of hell, and mysticism took early root among those who were moved by strong emotions. It was an effort to find a religion of the heart rather than of the intellect; the difficulty was made the greater by the Koranic warning that salvation depended wholly on the inscrutable will of Allah, who both guides aright and leads astray whom He will. The mystic was perplexed by the fact that fate was inscribed upon the eternal table of God's providence, and nothing could alter it. There was, therefore, in Mohammed's teaching the germ of two widely differing conceptions of God, which in the Prophet's lifetime were never reconciled. The deism of the desert was ranged against the theism of non-Arab religious thought so widely prevalent in Arabia in the seventh century, and while possibly we may not need to go beyond Islam for the origin of mystical thought in Mohammedanism yet, as will be shown later, Sufism did introduce new elements into the faith which have exercised a profound influence upon

the religion ever since.¹ What we see in process in Islamic history is the development of certain ideas and doctrines of the Koran, culled from Christian idealism. Mohammed denounced asceticism, monkhood, and celibacy, and called his followers to holy wars, not to a contemplative life. But when Moslems reached Syria, Egypt, and in particular Persia, they came into contact with new ideas that profoundly modified their old faith. Just because the Koran is the amalgamation of ideas from Jewish, Christian and Pagan sources, it does contain contradictory theories of religious doctrines. In Mohammed's day simple faith accepted the Koran as the word of God, but the contradictions were there nevertheless, and it only required contacts with other races with a great history, a highly developed culture, and a deep religious life to bring out clearly the rift that had existed from the first.

Such a situation arose when the Moslem armies overran Persia, annexed the country, overthrew the ruling dynasty, laid the pride and glory of Persia in the dust, and compelled the people to become Mohammedans. In the coming of Islam to Persia two powerful religions met, and two races with age-long feuds opposed one another. Persia had been weakened by protracted wars with Byzantine Rome; a weakling sat on the throne of the Shahs, and, as we have already seen, the Arabs, roused to a frenzy of fervour and fanaticism by their new-found faith, rushed to martyrdom or victory, death in battle or wealth from the spoils of war.

Almost before the Prophet was buried dissension, strife and rivalry had rent Islam in two. One party supported Abu Bakr as Caliph; the other contended that a caliph must be a member of Mohammed's own family, and chose Ali, the only possible candidate who fulfilled that condition. The faction, however, in support of Abu Bakr won the day, and Ali had to wait until three caliphs had

¹ For further reference to this subject see *The Mystics of Islam*, R. A. Nicholson.

died before he reached the summit of his ambition. His reign was for a brief five years, when it was suddenly terminated by an assassin's sword. The division in Islam continued. The one party called themselves Sunnis—a word denoting "The People of the Path." They were traditionalists, and claimed to be the orthodox members of Islam. The rival faction took the title of Shiahs, or followers, because they followed Ali and rejected the other caliphs.

The Persians espoused the cause of Ali, and soon began to give a new connotation to Islam. When the Moslem armies entered Persia the national faith was Zoroastrianism, and while the Persians nominally accepted Islam, they never gave up much of their old faith. They brought it over with them and sought to adapt Islam to their own spiritual needs and imaginative temperament. Our study in this chapter, therefore, is of an aspect of Islam widely different from that which we have seen in Arabia.¹

The Shiahs, in adopting the faction of Ali, developed it into a cult. They declared that the caliphate was of a supernatural character, and that a caliph must not only be without spot or taint of evil, but also incapable of sin. This led to the doctrine of the primeval creation of Ali. He was created, they taught, before Adam, and before the earth existed. The Shiahs believe that there have been twelve caliphs or imams, the first of whom was Ali. The last of the twelve, Mohammed, son of Hassan el Askari, is supposed to be still alive and hidden in some secret place until the end of the world, when he will again appear as the Mahdi.

Mohammed had accepted as a part of his doctrine that the Jews and the Christians had each received a divine revelation, but the Shiahs added to these two the Zoroastrians, or Magians, as they were then called, and said that they too had had a revelation from God. This enabled

¹ For the history of Persia the reader is referred to *Persia*, by Sir Percy Sykes.

the Persians to maintain links with their historical past, and to use their own religious literature while professing Mohammedanism. They adopted a principle of religious compromise, whereby they were allowed to commit pious frauds, either to deny or water down their Shiah beliefs in time of persecution. This made it impossible for any one to know what a Shiah really believed. They were never converted to Islam as the Arabs understood it. The Persians, by the adoption of Shiahism, devised a scheme by which the very religion of Islam should become an instrument of its own destruction, and power should return to Persia by the triumphs of the Shiahs over the Arabs: an ideal never attained, however, as the vast majority of Moslems refused to become Shiahs. By a thoroughgoing propaganda the Shiahs sought to win the Moslem world to the cult of Ali. Their emissaries travelled far and wide. They were all things to all men. To the orthodox they taught the simple lessons of the Koran with some insistence upon the immediate return of the Mahdi. To the philosopher they would argue from the points of pure reason and lead to a conclusion of sheer negation.

It will be seen from what has been said that the Shiahs exercised much more freedom of thought than was allowed in Arabia. They did not consider themselves bound by authority in the same way as the Sunnis did. They demanded the right of interpretation and liberty to develop on their own national lines, and with such tendencies to deductive reasoning they not only opened the door to wide divergencies of opinion between Shiahs and Sunnis, but also to differences among themselves. Thought among them ranged from absolute pantheism to tales of miracle and superstition. In the Shiah sect extremes meet. Asceticism is preached by some with burning ardour, and yet others fall into gross licentiousness. In a soil of this sort we have many of the elements necessary for the development of a strong national religious consciousness, Islamic in form, but eastern and mystical in content.

The fact that the last imam, or caliph, was believed to be alive and only waiting for the right moment in which to reveal himself, gave rise to all sorts of secret societies and led naturally to the schemes and plots of pretending Mahdis. It is, however, with those who, while remaining Moslems, were seekers after truth and light that we wish to deal mainly in this chapter.

Islam, with its legal system, its Arab mould and its desert conception of God, must appear at first sight as impossible ground in which any mystical plant could grow. The detail of ritual and the cold formality of the religion seem to be poles apart from eastern mysticism. This compromise, however, has been attempted by the mystics who ignored the literal words of Mohammed and adopted a mystic and spiritual interpretation of the Koran. The Shiah sect lent itself readily to such adaptations by its doctrine of the divine attribute of the caliphs and imams. As Shiah followers travelled and studied other faiths they gleaned ideas from Zoroastrians, Hindus, Gnostics; and with some Islam simply became an adaptation of the Vedanta School of Hindu philosophers. However much the orthodox Moslems might appeal to reason and logic, the mystics could not find it any substitute for their sense of the beautiful or their contemplation of the love of God and the union of the soul with the Divine. The desire for communion with God lay at the root of this movement, and the soul-hunger of Moslems who could find no spiritual nourishment in the husks of Arabia sought satisfaction in the search for a God who was immanent and ever working in His creatures, who was the Sum of all existence, the Fulness of life, the Omnipresent who dwelt in and communed with each individual soul.¹

From the earliest days of Islam these mystical tendencies have been apparent, and as Mohammedanism took root in Persia they found expression in what has come to be known as Sufism. In spite of the common saying, "There is no

¹ See E. Sell, *Essays on Islam*, p. 2.

monkhood in Islam," a Persian in the ninth century founded a monastery, and his followers were called Sufis or Woolers, from the woollen garments which they wore. These monks lived a contemplative life, and sought in pantheism a rest of heart that they could not find in the God of Arabia. Their main doctrine was that the souls of men differ in degree but not in kind from the Divine Spirit. The human soul is an emanation of the Divine Spirit and ultimately will return to it. "He alone is perfect love and beauty and so love to Him is the only real thing; all else is illusion."¹ The poet Sadi says—"I swear by the truth of God that when He showed me His glory all else was illusion."²

The present life is one of separation from the beloved. The beauties of nature, music, and art revive in men the divine idea and recall their affections from wandering from Him to other objects. These sublime affections men must cherish, and by abstraction concentrate their thoughts on God, and so approximate to His essence, and finally reach the highest stage of bliss—absorption into the Eternal.³

The doctrine of the Sufis states that God alone exists. He is in all things and all things are in Him. This carries with it the corollary that nothing is distinct from God and everything is an emanation from Him. The religious laws of Islam were often regarded as matters of indifference. They had their use as stepping-stones to reality. There does not exist any real difference between good and evil because God is the author of all acts of man. The will of man is not free and all his actions are fixed by God. The body is a cage which confines the soul. This imprisonment finds no release except through death; therefore the true Sufi longs for death that his enslaved soul may return to God. Life in the body is described as a stage of purification to perfect the soul for true reunion with God. This

¹ E. Sell, *Faith of Islam*, p. 122.

² E. Sell, *Faith of Islam*.

³ Quoted in above.

naturally leads the Sufi to a life of meditation. The unity of God fills his soul and carries with it a wealth of meaning altogether beyond what Mohammed meant when he preached that God is one. To him the unity of God was a unity of isolation and separation from the human. God was one in the sense that He had no partner, and not at all in the pantheistic sense that God was one because there was nothing but God in the world. Mohammed never contemplated absorption in the Divine. He saw man not as a divinity but as the human slave of the Creator. The Sufis took up the doctrine of the unity of God and saw in it the ultimate goal of the soul; life became a journey and a pathway by which the divine in man could attain ultimately to complete unification with God.

In all this there are elements common to all the great religions. Much in it is similar to Hindu philosophy, much reminds us of the Gnostics of ancient Greece, and there are many similarities to Christian mysticism. To show where Islam differs from other faiths on its mystical side is extremely difficult. The Moslem had as a background the Koran and the doctrines of the faith, and when he tended to swing away into pantheism he was pulled up sharply by his creed. Mysticism is more a tendency of feeling and emotion than any definite system of religious thought, and these emotions find expression in all faiths where the human heart seeks for communion and fellowship with God. It has always flourished at periods when organized religion had become formal and cold. At times of decay in religion, such as the Abbaside period, it again came to the front as men, sick of a religion of ease and pleasure, sought comfort and help in a life of devotion. The Middle Ages in Europe produced many saintly mystics who failed to find what they sought in the scholastic theology of the day. At a later day and for the same reason the Quakers and William Law rediscovered once more the mystical elements in Christianity.

There is a striking resemblance between Sufism and the

seven Christian stages given by St Augustine in the *Ascent of the Soul*. Of the last stage he writes :

I entered and beheld with the mysterious eye of my soul the light that never changes, above the eye of my soul, above my intelligence. It was something altogether different from any earthly illumination.¹

There are marked similarities between the Moslem and Christian types of mysticism. The terminology is often similar. Both speak of life as a "way" or a journey in which the soul grows into fellowship with the Divine. Both emphasize prayer and both seek a personal God "who shall be susceptible of relations with men, for the recognition of all that is implied in human nature and for immortality."²

Love is a mark common to both, and the contemplative life of devotion is a common ideal. Where then does Christianity materially differ from Islam on its mystical side ? The answer lies in the background of the two faiths and in the ideals of Jesus and Mohammed. The Moslem mystic who drifts into sheer pantheism is more Hindu than Moslem, and his ideal of ultimate complete absorption into God places him in a category by himself. He has practically ceased to be a Moslem in the ordinary sense of the word. But the man who steepes himself in mystical thought and still remains a Mohammedan, with the Koran as his text-book and Mohammed as his Prophet, may be compared to the Christian who finds his inspiration in the New Testament and maintains a true loyalty to Christ.

The same terms may be used with widely different meanings. Love in Islamic mysticism is an abstract thing, an emotion aroused by the contemplation of God. The stages of love are described by Moslem writers as first, the inclining of the soul to the object of love, then love

¹ Quoted in E. Sell, *The Mystic of Islam*, p. 16, from *Christian Mysticism*, by W. R. Inge.

² See *Progress in Religion*, T. R. Glover, p. 330.

cleaving to the heart, the ardour of love accompanied by pleasure, inward love leading to a state of enslavement and distraction accompanied by loss of reason, and overpowering love with a wandering about at random.¹

Love in the Christian sense is a disinterested quest of the real, the good and the beautiful, which finds expression not in the abstract contemplation which ultimately deprives man of his reason but in a life of service and sacrifice. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" asks St John. And herein lies the wide difference between Islamic and Christian mysticism. Behind this difference are the widely divergent conceptions of God as revealed by Jesus Christ and Mohammed.

The Christian is not, through the mystical road, seeking to acquire merit and by arduous labour working his way towards acceptance with God. He starts at the Cross and the revelation of God's love, free and unmerited, for a sinful and suffering humanity. Love is called out in the Christian "because He first loved us," as St Paul says. He accepts forgiveness of sins freely through Jesus Christ, and his journey is a growth in knowledge of God and communion with Him. The Moslem sees life as a journey from darkness to light, as an eternal quest and struggle. The Christian begins with the fact that at the commencement of the journey he has been "brought out of darkness to light." There is a world of difference between the wild dancing of dervishes, or the unhealthy excitement of the zikrs (public repetitions of the name of God), and the example that Christ gave of prayer life. He spent nights in prayer, "but there is not a trace in the Gospels of rapturous ecstasy or strange visions. 'Let not your heart be troubled' is His parting message to His disciples."²

Much of the mysticism of the East is entirely self-centred, and little thought is given to a suffering world by

¹ See *Kulliyat*, Mir Abu-l-Baga.

² W. R. Inge, *Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion*, p. 31.

those who are absorbed in freeing their own souls from the slavery of the body. Introspection often means an indifference to the needs of others and makes life selfish and love meaningless. Christ sought to save the world from a mysticism that makes religion so individualistic that it never finds expression in sacrificial service for the world. He showed that the highest and deepest worship of God lies in service for fellow-men. His life, in complete harmony with God, in unbroken communion with the Father, was a life of toil and service in an all-embracing love for men. He carried in his heart the burdens of the world, and communion with God meant for Him not introspective selfishness, nor a self-centred contemplative life, but a selfless giving of Himself for the life of the world.

The Sufi novice is instructed to put aside all worldly thoughts, to detach himself from all sense of home, family, or country, and, in retirement, to concentrate his whole mind on God. He begins by repeating over and over again the word Allah, Allah, and he continues in this meditation until his mind is so absorbed in God that the very word drops out and the mystical soul is concentrated on the meaning of God, who fills heart, mind and will. At this stage there comes to the Sufi a divine illumination, a spiritual experience, that lifts the soul into communion and fellowship with God. Dogma, reason and logic are thus displaced by the "inner light," which illuminates the heart and guides the life of man. When a man wishes to become a Sufi he places himself under the direction of a superior, who examines him as to his sincerity, and says, "You are the garden and I the gardener." The applicant binds himself to follow the spiritual directions of the sheikh wholly and entirely, and in this manner he enters on the Mystic Way.

Some of his preliminary directions are :

Keep the commands of Allah and abstain from the things prohibited.

In the way and the law become learned.

Look not on the faults of others.

Supply the needs of the needy with justice and mercy.

Think of nought but the Law, the Way, the Knowledge of the Reality.¹

Life, according to the Sufi, is a "way," or a journey, in which there are seven stages. The discipline is very severe, and the spiritual exercises involve fasting and silence. In a monastery the novice will be sent to a small dark cell where he has to *sit* for forty days and nights. He is not allowed to lie down at night, but takes his sleep as he sits at prayer. He comes forth from his cell to take part in the *Zikr*, in which the men form a ring and commence to repeat the word God—all together they chant Allah, Allah, Allah. The word is from time to time varied by other names for God, as "The Living," and this is kept up until a state of ecstasy is reached, when the worshippers in rapture forget themselves and everything and Allah becomes all. Men in this state will run skewers through their arms and cheeks, stab themselves with knives, handle fire, and even chew in their mouths live coals, and yet no hurt or harm is done; no blood is seen, and the mouth is not burnt. I have frequently watched these *Zikrs*, and have handled the long skewers made of wrought iron, and have been baffled time and again at the ceremony. The Sufi answer simply is that the body becomes spiritualized and feels no pain at all.

Seventy thousand veils separate God from the world of matter. The inner half of the veils are light and the outer half darkness, and the soul at birth is imprisoned in the body and separated by these many veils from God. The Mystic Way is designed as a way of escape by which man can penetrate through the veils and recover his original unity with the Divine. For every stage through which the Sufi passes ten thousand veils are taken away. These are

¹ Quoted in *The Way of a Mohammedan Mystic*, by W. H. T. Gairdner. I am indebted to Canon Gairdner for much of the material in this chapter on the Mystic Way.—W. W. C.

the seven stages through which all must pass if they would find God :

First Stage.

The soul depraved. This is the state of all men, corrupted by sin, unregenerate and natural. In this stage the pilgrim has to face the facts of his life and its failings. The root evils to be eradicated are lust, anger, ignorance, doubt, polytheism, etc.

The following prayer has to be repeated hundreds of times :

My God, show to me my outward self.
By the authority of There is no God save Allah.
And certify my inward self
Of the truth of There is no God save Allah.
And keep me from trouble and sickness
By the truth of There is no God save Allah.

Second Stage.

The soul accusatory. During this stage the pilgrim repeats this prayer :

My God, make the heart of thy feeble servant a place of manifestation for thy essence and a place of welling forth for thy signs ; and grant me to be established in making mention of thee, O Allah.

It is a period of strict introspection, when the soul accuses itself of its evils, repents and seeks to cut away the things that hinder progress in the journey.

Third Stage.

The soul inspired. Here the pilgrim receives positive teaching on love as the divine passion, and seeks to regain the inner sight—the faith of seeing.

Fourth Stage.

The soul tranquil. Here the old life is left behind. The evils fought against disappear, and virtues begin to

spring up in their place. The struggle is over, and everything from now on leads to Allah.

Fifth Stage.

The soul God-satisfied. Here begins true knowledge. The previous stages have been preliminary, but now the pilgrim is initiated into the secrets of Sufism. A new song is put into the mouth of the pilgrim :

Ho, Soul, thou soul tranquil. Return unto thy Lord, God-satisfied, God-satisfying, thus enter among my servants and enter into my Paradise.

Sixth Stage.

The soul God-satisfying. Here the pilgrim reaches the stage when he is not only satisfied in God, but also when he is the object of God's satisfaction.

Seventh Stage.

The soul perfect. Here at last the pilgrim reaches Reality. He has now attained, and he sees himself in perfect oneness with God. His creed is "There is no God save I." ¹

Underlying all in this journey is the entire negation of self in order to make clear the truth that there is no existence save that of God.

While Sufism has flourished in Persia it is by no means confined to that country, nor is it limited to the Shiah sect. Devout souls of every age have sought God in the Mystic Way. One of the earliest of these mystics was Hasan Basri, who died in A.D. 728. He was born in Medina, where his mother lived as a slave in the Prophet's family. At an early age he practised a severe form of asceticism. His fearless preaching attracted attention, and his life was a constant search for God. When asked about his spiritual

¹ For a full account of these seven stages, see *The Way of a Mohammedan Mystic*, W. H. T. Gairdner, p. 13.

state he said, "My state is like that of a man shipwrecked in the sea, who is clinging to a solitary plank."¹

The next famous of these early mystics, strangely enough, was a woman, Rabiah. In an age when women were despised she overcame impossible physical difficulties and won for herself a place of honour and esteem among the leaders of religious thought in her day. She was a slave girl, who in severe bondage could pray, "Lord, I am far from my own, a captive and an orphan, and yet none of these things grieve me. Only this one thought causes me disquiet: it is that I know not if Thou art satisfied with me." She was consumed by a passionate love for God, and eventually through her piety softened the heart of her master and won her liberty. She was accustomed to spend whole nights in prayer, and when she was asked whether she was troubled by Satan, replied, "I love the Lord so much I do not trouble myself about the enmity of Satan." Costly presents and money were offered to her, but she refused them all in her determination to trust God for her daily bread. She was a great sufferer, yet rejoiced in the will of God. "He is not sincere," she used to say, "who does not find delight in the afflictions which the Lord sends." She died in 752 as she had lived, a great saint. Her life is perhaps best summed up in the following saying of hers—"My God, if it is from fear of hell that I serve Thee, condemn me to burn in hell; and if it is for hope of Paradise, forbid me entrance there; but if it is for Thy sake only, deny me not the sight of Thy face."

That this movement was not simply due to a particular type of devout Moslem is seen by the fact that men of notoriously bad character were converted and adopted the ascetic life. Fudhayl Ben Aziz was a highwayman and robber in the early part of the ninth century when he heard a voice calling him to repentance, and from that day his

¹ For an account of the lives of Hasan Basri and Rabiah, see *Mystics and Saints of Islam*, Claud Field, pp. 18-35.

old life was forgotten in his new-found love for God. "I serve God," he said, "because I cannot help serving Him for my very love's sake."

Among these mystics there are experiences common to all. They found in prayer not only access to God, but the fullest and freest communion with Him. Prayer was not a matter of formula or rites, but the outpouring of hearts aflame with passion for the Divine. The love of God was a characteristic note among them all. They heard a voice speaking to them, which they accepted implicitly as the voice of God, and obeyed it. Dreams played a great part in their lives, and many of them began to travel the Mystic Way through a vivid dream. Characters were reformed and a hatred of sin and evil developed as they sought God through an ascetic life. Such was Zun Nun of Egypt, who prayed that he might have no certainty of subsistence for the morrow, that he might never be honoured among men, and that he might see God's face in mercy on his death-bed. Some of the mystics in their spiritual experiences saw their lives as emanations of the Deity, and suffered martyrdom for heresy. Mansour Hallaj, who denied that the specific performances, such as the pilgrimage, were obligatory, was put to death in the tenth century for declaring, "I am the truth," which was one of the recognized names for God. Others, when suffering the most horrible tortures, were so filled with a sense of the love of God that they prayed forgiveness for their persecutors.

However much we may criticize Sufism for its pantheism, its denial of freewill and personal responsibility, and its ultimate end in utter negation, the fact remains that the mysticism of the Sufis and kindred movements has profoundly affected Islam, and if the Dervish orders to-day are any gauge of its strength, it is true to say that this quest for God through the Mystic Way is the most potent and spiritual factor in the whole world of Islam at the present time. It is impossible to estimate the number of

Moslems who are members of Dervish orders, but if their strength in Egypt is any guide, probably well over fifty per cent of the population of that country are Dervishes. It is equally true to say that Dervishism appeals most powerfully to the poor and ignorant, who in their own dim way are conscious of a deep spiritual need, and seek to satisfy it through the experience of the mystical repetition of the name of God. The majority never enter a monastery, they do not travel far on the "way," but they are seeking God, and in this quest lies the strength of Islam far more than in the cold dogmas of the Azhar University, or the enlightened new Islam of Aligarh or Woking.

It was in the eleventh century that from out of this mystical movement there sprang a man who has left a mark upon the world far beyond the frontiers of Islam. Al-Ghazali¹ was born in Khorasan, Persia, in A.D. 1058, and died in 1111. He studied widely, and soon earned a great reputation as a scholar. He steeped himself in Sufi thought, read Koranic theology, travelled extensively and was ever in search of truth. He describes himself at one stage as a thoroughgoing sceptic. Rationalism was strong and free, and independent thought made the orthodox position difficult. The struggle between science and religion was at its height.

Ghazali found no help in scepticism, nor did he find philosophy any guide in his trouble. He turned to mysticism for solace and comfort. His need was spiritual. To eat, drink and be merry was no remedy for a man determined to find the truth. He tells his experiences thus :

I saw that Sufism consists in experiences rather than in definitions, and what I was lacking belonged rather to the domain not of instruction but of ecstasy and initiation.

His search gave him three ideas that became fixed in his

¹ For further reference, see *Al-Ghazali*, by W. H. T. Gairdner, and *A Moslem Seeker after God*, by S. M. Zwemer.

experience : the fact of God ; inspiration ; and the Last Judgment. He says—

I saw that the only condition of success was to sacrifice honours and riches, and to sever the ties and attachments of worldly life.

After a long struggle he yielded his will to God and threw himself on Divine mercy. He gave up all his fortune and began to travel as a simple pilgrim. He visited Damascus, Jerusalem, and Mecca, and sought peace through the Mystic Way. On the subject of prayer he rises beyond the limit of ordinary Moslem teaching. Prayers, he says, are of three kinds—the first those spoken only with the lips ; the second, when by resolution the soul is able to fix its thoughts on Divine things though disturbed by worldly affairs ; and the third, when God takes possession of the soul and the soul of him who prays is absorbed in God. Here all consciousness of self ceases, and the soul is absorbed in God. Ghazali was denounced as a heretic, and yet probably his name is to-day, after that of Mohammed, more honoured in Islam than any other. He exercised a kindly influence on those whose creed was hard and fanatical. He softened the stern hand of those who thought persecution a merit, and by his breadth of outlook he widened the minds of many whose views were set in an iron mould. He saved Islam from decrepitude and opened to the Moslem world the glorious possibilities of a life hid in God. In the days when new learning and science were shaking the foundations of Islam he showed that there was no necessary contradiction between religion and science. While he drank deeply of the learning of his age he remained to the end a humble seeker after God, and he is one of the few mystics of Islam who have won and held the admiration of the orthodox. While he practised Sufism, yet he never became a true pantheist. In fact, he led men back to a new study of the Koran and the Traditions. His ethical teaching did much to stem the

tide of immorality and evil so prevalent in his day. Mysticism ever since, though in varied forms, has had an assured place in orthodox Islam.

How far did Al-Ghazali approach to a real knowledge of God? The vision he sought was always full of fear of judgment. His life was one long and sincere search with many wonderful spiritual experiences, and he died as he lived, still seeking.¹ He serves to illustrate the best type of Sufism.

We must trace out further movements in Persia that sprang from the Shiah schism. Among the doctrines of the Shiah, as we have seen, was that of the Imam, or hidden caliphs. The last, or twelfth, imam, Abu-l-Kasim, who lived in the tenth century, is supposed to have held communication with his followers through a number of men called Abwab, or doors. The last of these "doors" of communication refused to appoint a successor. The minds of the Shiahites were much exercised as they had no "Bab" or spiritual director. About 1848 Mirza Ali Mohammed, a youth of twenty-four, declared himself to be the Bab or door: "Whosoever wishes to approach the Lord his God, or to know the true way that leads to Him, ought to do it through me," he said. Many pious Moslems believed that in this man the signs of the twelfth imam were fulfilled. His followers multiplied rapidly. Mystics who longed for reform in Persia joined him too. But when he sought to convert Shiraz to his doctrine he was pronounced mad and put in prison. His followers increased so rapidly that he was ordered to be executed at Tabriz. The story that follows is best told in the words of a great authority on Persia:

In the great square he received the volley of the firing party and when the smoke had cleared away he had disappeared. Had he gained the bazaar he might have escaped, and his religion would have been established by a miracle—

¹ See *Worship in Islam*—a translation with commentary of Al-Ghazali's Book of the *Ihya* on the Worship, by E. C. Calverley.

as it would have been deemed. Unfortunately for himself he took refuge in the guard-room, whence he was taken out again and the sentence was carried out.¹

The theory generally given of this remarkable occurrence is that the shots from the rifles cut the rope that bound the Bab but left him uninjured.

After his death the new doctrine spread rapidly and the poor Babists suffered terrible persecutions. In Teheran a veritable reign of terror began. No mercy was shown to the Babists, and their dead bodies filled the streets for days. To-day the number of Babists in Persia is said to be about a million. They are to be found in every walk of life from the highest ministers of the Court to the humblest of the poor. In persecution they remained firm and scarcely any recanted under threat or promise.

The Babists were now divided into two sects under two leaders, Mirza Yahya and his half-brother, Beha'ullah. These men fled to Baghdad and were deported by the Turks to Adrianople. They lived together for a time, but were separated by the Turks—Mirza was sent to Cyprus, and Beha to Acre in Palestine. The followers of Mirza dwindled to an insignificant number, but Abd-el-Beha'ullah (to give him his full title), a name meaning "the slave of the splendour of God," carried on his work from Acre and considerably increased his following.

Out of the mysticism of the Shiah sect has come this new faith, which is not recognized by Moslems as being in any sense Mohammedan. Beha claimed to have been sent to perfect the laws of Christ and Mohammed, and his laws are similar to and largely based upon the New Testament.

Babists differ from Mohammedans in believing that no revelation is final. (Islam has always taught that Mohammed gave the final and complete revelation of God to the world.) A new revelation is given, the Babists say, to each age as a preparation for the fuller teaching of Him whom God will reveal.

¹ Sir Percy Sykes, *Persia*, p. 128.

In one of Beha'ullah's writings we read :

I swear by the son of Truth that the people of Beha have not any aim save the prosperity and reformation of the world, and the purifying of the nations.

He taught the need of inner purity of life. "Every one," he said, "who desireth victory must first subdue the city of his own heart with the sword of spiritual truth and of the Word."

As time went on the break with Islam became more apparent. Prayers were said three times a day instead of five. Worshippers gave up turning to Mecca in prayer. Slavery was forbidden. Polygamy was discouraged. Forgiveness of one's enemies became a rule of life. The followers were enjoined to adopt an attitude of friendliness towards people of all religions: from the testimony of those who have known them best, they have sought to live up to their creed.

We have seen that Persia, after suffering untold horrors through a Moslem invasion, accepted Islam and enriched it with new and mystical elements. National culture struggled with Islam and some in Persia turned in disgust to a philosophical agnosticism, while others found relief in ascetic practices. National culture triumphed and the deism of the desert was lost in the theism of Persian thought, which finds expression in a personal experience of God through love. The Babists sought to carry the idea of a divine revelation still further and suffered all the terrors of persecution from a fanatical people, but they held on until persecution ceased and Babism found a place in national life. Out of it springs the further development of Beha'ism, which seeks to apply in a practical way the mystic love of the Sufis, and to preach a gospel of brotherhood to the world.

Beha'ullah has given his followers many practical rules of life widely different from those in Islam, and by them he marks also his distinctive message as something not

trammelled entirely by the mystics of the past nor by the customs of Mohammedans. Although he has drawn largely upon Christianity for much that is novel in this sect, yet he shows his Islamic background by his sanction of polygamy and by easy divorce. He differs in one important respect from Islam in this. Either party can claim a divorce after a separation of a year. His insistence upon the equality of the sexes is a marked advance upon Islamic morals. He claimed Divine inspiration for his utterances in much the same way that Mohammed did, and the followers of Beha must accept every utterance made by him without reserve. This new doctrine is based upon Beha as a manifestation of God, and therefore the first duty of his followers is to attain to "a knowledge of the Dayspring of His revelation and the Dawning-place of His command."

The Behai conception of God is widely different from Mohammed's. "God is not a personality but an essence, an all-pervading force or power frequently referred to as love or truth or life."

"A messenger comes whenever, through the lapse of time and the forgetfulness of men, the voice of his predecessor becomes obscured; and the extent to which the truth is declared by each depends upon the capacity of the age to receive it. Such messengers were Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and the founder of the Behai faith. The revelation of the last is fuller than any which has preceded it, men being now better fitted to understand the truth."¹ The human soul, says Abbas Effendi, the successor to Beha'ullah, is a ray of God's love. The soul seeks to attain ultimate perfection when it passes beyond time, place and form and is man and God in one. Past religions are regarded as dead forms, and all that is good in them has been revealed in this new body. The Behai therefore looks upon his founder as a world teacher without limit of race or nation. The programme of the Behais is

¹ See Phelps's *Abbas Effendi*, p. 159. Quoted by E. Sell, in *Bahaiism*, p. 43.

ambitious for it seeks to gather together all races by the acceptance of Beha'ullah as the last manifestation of God and the Divine guide for the unification of all religions. Here we get back to something of Mohammed's own ideal, but there is a difference. Universal religion in this new faith is based upon love, peace and harmony among all nations.

The Moslem mystics in their wild flights of imagination have refused to be trammelled by tradition and have claimed the right of private judgment even where it conflicts with the orthodox standards of Islam. This has created a mentality widely different from that of the Arab, and some of the by-products of Persian thought are seen in the determination of many Moslems to apply liberty of thought to modern demands. Mohammedans used to consider people of other faiths as outside the scope of God's mercy, but with the varied forms of religion, from the Shiah to the Sufis and the Babists to the Behais, the attitude of many is changing to that of a common search for truth in co-operation with religious people of other faiths. There is a general dissatisfaction with things as they are. Some are looking back to Zoroastrianism, some seek to find their goal in Behaism, others, as in the days of the Abbasides, are drifting towards rationalism ; among the intelligentsia there is a desire to reform Islam, to revise its system and once more to evolve a faith that will meet human needs. Peoples which in the past have produced great mystics and have sought to find God along the lines of spiritual experience, are not going to be content with the husks of a past religion. The spiritual search that characterized so many centuries was a demand for life, and in these days of western influences and change the demand is still for life. Can Islam meet such a situation ?

CHAPTER VII

ISLAM AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

WHILE on a journey through Palestine at the end of the war I came across a man ploughing. He was a simple peasant, dressed as Arab fellaheen have been for thousands of years. He might have been a son of any age of the Christian era or even before, and he was busy covering over the scars of a war-torn country by filling in trenches, levelling and ploughing. The native plough was primitive indeed—it was a long shaft of wood shaped like the letter Y lying on its side. The tail of the letter ran along the backs of a camel and a mule. One tip of the Y was formed into a handle and the other tip was touching the ground and acted as the ploughshare. A further glance at this crude implement showed the share to be shod with iron—nay, not iron, but the steel blade of a cavalry sword picked up from a neighbouring battlefield. In the peasant's hand was a goad with a sharp nail at one end, which he administered impartially to camel and mule alike, with simultaneous imprecations on their stupidity, and prayers to Allah for the harvest.

Here was illustrated what has taken place in many parts of the Moslem world. The fellah had but a short time before been a soldier in the Turkish army: he had been lifted out of an isolated and conservative environment to fight. He had been drawn along with others into the whirlpool of the nations, and when the war was over he returned to his ancestral home to make good the waste places and to adapt whatever came to hand as a help to this end. His old barriers had been broken down. The ploughshare was the first step in many momentous changes.

These people are emerging into a new world of western influence, education and science. Primitive methods are being replaced by western machinery. The simile may perhaps be carried a stage further. The sword-shod plough is like western influence ploughing deep into the soil of Arab custom and tradition. The plough, after all, was but making furrows and channels for irrigation, through which could pour the waters of the Jordan, and surely the war, too, in its ploughing has made new avenues through which might flow the waters of a new and fuller life. The cast-iron system of Islam has cracked badly, and education, literature, and learning are pouring in through the cracks a wealth of new ideas that are significant of greater changes in the days to come. The mule and the camel were unequally yoked—the yoke, slant-wise, chafed the neck of the one and bore heavily on the other; yet both animals sought to tread the same path. Orthodox Islam often appears mulish in its obstinacy, while the progressive modernist, with camel-like superiority, presses his new ideas on all and sundry. Both are ploughing in their own ways. Both are making the face of the earth different. Behind both animals followed the man with the goad, guiding the plough and keeping up the pace by a vigorous thrust as one or other beast slackened. To those turning over the soil of Islam western impacts serve for goads. They are being driven on by new forces towards a goal which they but dimly see. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Turkey, where Islam was entrenched with all the authority of sultan-caliph, law and order, and where the plough of western life has cut deep into customs and practices and is rapidly changing the face of the country.

The story begins in the thirteenth century with a nomadic tribe which, because of the advancing Mongol hordes, was driven from its camping grounds in Khorasan and made its way westward into Armenia. This tribe allied themselves to the Seljuks in opposing the Mongol advance, and as a reward were given rich lands in Asia Minor on which

to settle. By the end of the thirteenth century the tribe had gained complete independence from the Seljuks, and in 1295, when Othman, as a new ruler, had his name mentioned in the Friday prayers, the Ottoman empire was founded. The word Ottoman is, of course, a corruption of Othman, the founder of the dynasty. Each successive sultan at his enthronement was girded with the sword of Othman, and from 1295 to 1924 the succession of Ottoman Sultans was unbroken.

As territory was conquered nomadic habits were broken. The Turks hitherto had been dependent for their troops upon the heads of the clans who supplied their quota in time of war. This system had been both the strength and weakness of Arabia. Disputes among the clans made the position of the Sultan precarious, and the Turks decided to change the system. Christian towns in Asia Minor had been captured and the strong and healthy Christian boys were collected and formed into a corps. Every year a thousand of these lads were drafted into the new Turkish army. They were brought up as Moslems under an iron discipline and, cut off from homes, parents, and country, they were hardened into a military brotherhood, which formed the great bulwark of the Turkish empire.

Turkish penetration to the Bosphorus was rapid and easy, and eastern Europe fell a prey to the savage hordes who invaded Christian homes and dragged out men and women, boys and girls, to be sold to the highest bidder in the open market. An unholy alliance was formed with the Emperor Cantacuzemus of Constantinople, who gave his daughter Theodora in marriage to the Sultan Orkhan, thus marking the first stage in the downfall of the Byzantine Empire.

While as yet Constantinople was spared, Serbia by the middle of the thirteenth century had become a Turkish pashalik, and continued so for over three hundred years. The Turks in those days showed a fanatical fury against the Christian population and a religious zeal in the found-

ing of Dervish orders. An open slave-trade with its horrors, and the wholesale slaughter of prisoners of war in cold blood were accepted practices. After the battle of Nicopolis (1396) Bayazid, the Sultan, after selecting twenty-four knights for ransom, slew ten thousand prisoners of war—knights, squires, and soldiers—in revenge for the Moslems slain in battle. The siege of Constantinople began at the beginning of the fifteenth century, but a new power, in the person of Timur (Tamerlane), appeared on the eastern horizon. Bayazid hurried across Asia Minor, and at Angora met Timur and was utterly routed. The Turkish empire, built up by the patience, ability and skill of successive sultans, was in a day shattered and ruined. The Sultan, who was captured in the fight, was imprisoned in an iron cage and carried from place to place in Timur's train.

To all outward appearances the rule of the Turks had come to an end; but the most astounding thing in the Turk is his vitality and power of recovery after defeat. Time after time the doom of the Turks has been pronounced, disaster has engulfed the empire, and always have the Turks risen, rejuvenated and powerful as ever. Timur laid Turkey waste, but he could not overthrow those characteristics which have always made it impossible for a Turk to know when he is defeated. By the middle of the fifteenth century Turkey had so far recovered as to be able to embark again on a new career of conquest. Salonica was captured, and its churches turned into mosques. Eastern Europe was once more invaded, but the Emperor's appeal to Europe for aid met with little response. The Latin Church aimed at the absorption of the Greek Orthodox Church, and made as a condition of its support the acceptance of the Roman Creed. The Greeks, rather than fall into the hands of the Pope, made alliance with the Turks, and the schism between the Christian bodies of East and West broke the one force that could withstand Islamic aggression.

Thus events moved forward until 1453, when Constantinople was again invested by a Turkish army. The siege lasted for fifty-three days, and then the great capital of eastern Christendom fell into the hands of a Turkish force. This was another turning-point in Moslem history. Islam had now an historical capital, a military strategic centre, and a naval base in Europe. It was at this time that the title *The Sublime Porte* came to be used for the seat of the Turkish government. Ambitions and hopes for the conquest of Europe ran high, and preparations were made for a great advance. The Sultan now aimed at the capture of Rome as a further step in the overthrow of Christianity.

The Sultan Mohammed is not only famous for his capture of Constantinople but also for his literary productions. *The Institutes of Mohammed* depict the Moslem empire under the symbol of a great tent, in which the four pillars represent the viziers, the judges, the treasurers, and the secretaries. The same *Institutes* lay it down as a commendable custom that when a sultan ascends the throne he should immediately put his brothers to death. This was long the practice in Turkey, and the accession of a new sultan was generally marked by the wholesale slaughter of his near kinsmen and other possible rivals.

In the early part of the sixteenth century Egypt became a province of Turkey, and another momentous change marked this addition to the Ottoman empire. The Abbaside Caliph had resided in Cairo, but the Sultan of Turkey could brook no rival, and by force he compelled the Caliph to transfer his office and authority of the caliphate to him. The sacred banner and mantle of the Prophet were conveyed to Constantinople, and the Sultan became *de facto* Caliph. In course of time this dual office, over a large part of the Moslem world, has also come to be recognized *de jure*. This transference of the caliphate was marked by the Sultan Salim by the massacre of forty thousand Moslem Shiahs as heretics, and an order for the general

slaughter of the Christians, which mercifully, through the intercessions of the Sheikh of Islam, was not carried out.

Before the sixteenth century closed Moslem armies had advanced as far as the gates of Vienna, and most of eastern Europe was dominated by Turkey. Italy had been invaded and Otranto captured, Baghdad and Mesopotamia were added to the empire. North Africa had also provided Turkey with new provinces. The Turks had risen in meteor-like fashion from being a fugitive nomadic tribe to being the founders of a great empire which extended from the Sudan through Egypt and North Africa, and included Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria, Armenia, and most of eastern Europe. They stood at the zenith of their power. Europe was hemmed in, the trade routes closed, the Mediterranean controlled by a Turkish fleet, and the highway to the East barred by an implacable foe which had sworn to conquer the world. The greatest prize of all seemed within Turkey's grasp—the conquest of western and central Europe. The church bells rang daily in every town in Germany for intercessions and prayers that the Moslem menace might be averted.

Europe was stirred at last to the peril of the situation, and yet even in this critical hour the heads of states were slow in moving, and to the people of Vienna and the Polish force that went to their rescue lies the honour of having saved all Europe from disaster. In 1683 Mohammed IV set out with an army of four hundred thousand men to attack Vienna and to crush the Christian nations. Had the Turks pressed the attack at once they could have entered Vienna, for the defences were poor, but by one of those curious turns of fortune which history reveals, the Turks delayed in pressing the attack while they laid waste the surrounding country. The delay gave Vienna its opportunity, and the whole population worked night and day at the defences. For two long months the Turks assaulted the city, and were everywhere repulsed. Mines were met by counter-mines, and heroic deeds were done by the

diminishing garrison in Vienna. With depleted resources they could not hold out much longer. Poland was sending relief—but would it arrive in time? Sickness and famine stalked through the city, but still the people refused to surrender. With their backs to the wall they were fighting a battle for all Europe, and the future of thrones and empires was in the balance. At last John Sobieski, King of Poland, arrived with eighty thousand fresh troops, and on September 12th, 1683, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Turks.

The King of Poland, in his address to the troops before the battle, said :

Warriors and friends ! Yonder in the plains are our enemies. We have to fight them on a foreign soil, but we fight for our own country, and under the walls of Vienna we are defending those of Warsaw and Cracow. We have to save to-day, not a single city, but the whole of Christendom, of which the city of Vienna is the bulwark.¹

This was the last great effort of Turkey to capture Europe. The seventeenth century had seen Turkey rise to the zenith of its power with an empire in three continents, and it also witnessed the first stages of its decline and fall. From this date the story of Turkey is one of a waning power and a shrinking empire.

The eighteenth century for Turkey was a period of feuds and wars with Russia. In 1774 the Turks were defeated by Russia, and a heavy blow was thus struck at Ottoman prestige. The Crimea was declared to be independent. Moldavia and Wallachia also became semi-independent states.

In the early part of the nineteenth century Serbia gained complete autonomy. Greek autonomy was granted in 1827. Mohammed Ali Pasha, the Governor of Egypt, forced Turkey to grant semi-independence to Egypt, under himself as Khedive. Serbia, Montenegro, and Rumania

¹ Stanley Lane-Poole, *Turkey*, p. 247.

had by 1878 declared their independence. A process of disintegration went on until 1908, when the Young Turks revolted, deposed Abdul Hamid II, and set up a constitution. This did not prevent still further inroads being made upon Turkish territory. In November 1911 Italy annexed Tripoli, and in 1913 the Balkan War broke out, which still further reduced the size of Turkey in Europe.

Islam, as we have seen, has changed its colour according to the country in which it has taken root. The great trek of Mongols, Seljuks and Turks is an historical event that, apart altogether from Islam, would have affected the West. The Islamizing of these earlier nomads welded them together, and out of warring tribes arose a nation with a book, a law, and a religion. The nation expanded into an empire, and Islam became the dominant faith throughout the Near East. All the countries thus occupied have great historical backgrounds and cultures of their own, and in most cases a faith in open conflict with Islam. The Turks started with eastern traditions and with a social system far different from that of Europe. They accepted the Koran as the one guide in religious, social and other matters. They inflicted the death penalty on all who deserted the faith. They entrenched themselves, as far as possible, against the possible influences of the West. But civilization was too far advanced for Islam to impose the Arabic language on European countries. Western life and thought pressed in upon Turkey, and although a rigid orthodoxy, supported by a despotic sultan, kept the Turks in servitude to Islam, yet the leaven of modern thought could not be kept out, and it increasingly permeated the life of the people.

Turkey to-day is casting off the traditions of the past, and is racing at the speed of an express train towards westernization. A new era in Turkish life and thought is emerging from the vortex of old Turkish customs, traditions, beliefs, and ambitions. We set out therefore to

study how a nation, under the very heel of a despotic sultan, backward in education, financially bankrupt, riddled with abuses of heavy taxation, bribery, and corruption, shackled to a conservative Arab creed which banned as pernicious all progressive thought outside Islam, and rooted in traditions with an eastern background, could change within a generation into a republic, forget its pan-Islamic dreams, break away from Koranic rules and customs, depose its sultan and caliph, recreate a new national consciousness thoroughly Turkish, and set out on a policy of complete westernization for the country.

From the time when the Turkish armies were rolled back from the gates of Vienna the Turks bitterly resented defeat by a western force. Later on they found it far more humiliating to be beaten by eastern Christian people, and their statesmen saw that if Turkey were to hold its own against the West it must adopt western methods.

For this reason the first western influences in the nineteenth century were all on the military side. Turkish reformers, while they retained a despotic Sultan, sought to introduce western efficiency in military affairs. The West, they argued, could only be fought with its own weapons, and Turkey in the nineteenth century, with Russia on the one side and the Balkan States on the other pressing her all the time, was struggling for her very existence. The superiority of the western military engine was admitted, but Turkey sought at first to attain a military efficiency equal to the West without acquiring the whole western way of life. As a set-off against western thought Islam was exalted, and to counteract western aggression Abdul Hamid sought, through a pan-Islamic policy, to unite all Moslems in a league of self-defence. The caliphate was made the slogan of this movement. The Turks were the defenders of the faith, the Sultan the head of Islam, and every political crisis was viewed from the standpoint of a holy war, in which the world of Islam would rise in defence of the faith.

The Sultan, in adopting these tactics, was playing upon a deeply rooted Moslem sentiment as old as Islam itself. Pan-Islamism stood for the solidarity of all true believers. It proclaimed a universal brotherhood, and to give substance to this theory the pilgrimage to Mecca was emphasized as one great means of illustrating the unity and solidarity of Islam. At the Kaaba in Mecca men of all races met. On equal footing they performed their devotions, and dreamed of the day when Islam would be the one world-religion. We have already seen how at the same time a puritan Mohammedan revival was taking place in Arabia, and new religious forces were being developed, which the astute Sultan was alert enough to recognize as of military importance, and to use for his own political ends. The caliphate was exalted in every way possible and a movement was started in India for its defence. If British policy appeared to impinge in the slightest degree on Turkey, rumblings were heard in India. As pan-Islamism developed it assumed a definitely anti-western character. Sporadic outbursts of Islamic fanaticism occurred in the Sudan and other places, but the Turks were too near Europe to be influenced by these. They saw that if they were to fight the West it must be with all the skill and resources available in Europe.

The Dervish orders, such as the Sennousi in North Africa, were caught by the glittering vision, and a great wave of proselytizing zeal spread through the Moslem world. In Africa, Islam made great strides. In India, Moslems awoke from their lethargy and set up educational institutions of far-reaching influence. In China in 1870 the Moslems rebelled, and fought in Hunan fiercely for their independence until they were finally subdued and crushed by the Chinese government. These movements were followed with close interest by Abdul Hamid, the Sultan of Turkey. Moslem agitators travelled everywhere warning their co-religionists of the peril of western domination. Sayed Jamal-el-Din was a leading propagandist in this

movement. After travelling in India, Egypt and elsewhere on Islamic propaganda, he settled in Turkey, and from there conducted his campaign until he was poisoned by order of the Sultan. He taught that the Christian world was opposed to Islam and was working for its destruction. The spirit of the Crusades still existed, he declared, and Europe regarded Islam with hatred and contempt. To counteract this he advocated a great defensive alliance to save Islam from destruction.

Abdul Hamid, nursing his cherished dreams of world conquest, sought to play off one European nation against another, and, for thirty years, through the agency of hundreds of emissaries, he carried out his political schemes with considerable astuteness for the strengthening of Turkey's position in the eyes of the world. In doing all this he completely overlooked the fact that his despotism at home was a closing of the safety-valve. While he dreamed of conquests in other lands, he failed to set his own house in order. His efforts to adopt western military methods had brought into Turkey many other novel ideas too, and the young educated Turks began to agitate for reforms in Turkey—for a constitution and a parliament; in other words, these western contacts led to the birth of nationalism in Turkey. Islam, based as it is upon a brotherhood that is supposed to transcend race and nationality, until recent years has not encouraged nationalism. The Sultan of Turkey was openly hostile to anything that would restrict his autocratic rule. The head of Islam in Turkey issued decrees declaring constitutionalism to be contrary to Islam on the ground that the Sultan-Caliph must rule alone and as master. The advocates of nationalism were driven into seclusion and secrecy.

At the same time as Abdul Hamid was spreading his pan-Islamic doctrines across the Moslem world dangerous national elements were growing in Constantinople; and while the military system of Turkey was being modelled on European lines the young officers were also imbibing

the doctrines of democracy and freedom. The culmination was the national revolution of 1908.

Nationalism in Turkey, while representing a revolt against the existing order, was equally a protest against European interferences in Ottoman affairs. The attitude of western nations appeared to the Young Turk to be that of hypocritical superiority. The Europeans in the West, the Young Turks said, posed as democratic people and at the same time acted in the East with arrogant autocracy, interfering in the affairs of nations and people to the advantage of Europe and the commercializing of the Orient. Many in Turkey took this view, with the result that Europe came to regard the Ottoman empire as "the Near Eastern Question." The Turks felt that the situation had become a "question" because of the material greed of Europe. The diplomacy of the West was given an ugly colour by European rivalries and jealousies, and the efforts of different powers to gain influence in Turkish affairs. This rivalry seemed to make Turkey itself of secondary consideration, and Moslems saw in European approaches nothing but selfish greed, which could only end ultimately in the subjugation of Turkey by the Christian West. Russia saw a fruitful opening through the Eastern Churches, and her various efforts to claim a protectorate over the Christians of Turkey created a national cleavage, which had dire results to the minorities of Turkey. The Sultan promised protection to his Christian subjects, but retaliated, when Russia pressed her claims, by wholesale slaughter of Armenians and others.

The intricacies of diplomacy were woven into the Armenian question, and Turkey looked upon her Christian subjects as a menace to her independence. Consequently, with all the barbarism of the old Mongol days, the Turks set out to exterminate them and thus end the "question." However much Christians of the West spoke of humanitarian considerations, the Turks considered such appeals a mere mask for a subtle covetousness and greed for

power in Turkey. The Young Turk party, while fighting for reforms and opposing the "Old Turks," found themselves thwarted at every turn by the intrigues of foreign powers. Now the contention is that in the old days of Turkish power the Armenians were regarded as "faithful people" and that their faith was respected, but that when Europe swung the Christian population away from Turkish allegiance and encouraged them to disloyalty they became a foreign element within the nation and a menace to the future independence of the Ottoman empire. The Patriarch was looked upon as a tool of Europe, and the Christians as a trump card in western diplomacy. While nothing can excuse the cold-blooded barbarism of the Sultan Abdul Hamid in the Armenian massacres, we should not lose sight of the fact that it was to some extent the diplomatic intrigue of western powers in seeking to divide one section of the Turkish people from another, and to pit Christian against Moslem, that was partly responsible for the rebirth of a national consciousness as against an Islamic consciousness. Previously, the whole emphasis had been on a pan-Islamic ideal centred in a Turkish caliphate, and this conception did not necessarily allow of any strong Turkish sentiment. Racial feelings were subordinated to credal responsibilities. But in 1908 the Young Turks began a movement which aimed at a united and strong nation, based upon Turkish nationalism, quite irrespective of creed or religion.

A group of young men, in an almost impossible environment, were wrestling with a great idea, learnt from contact with European thought and literature. Hitherto their history had been simply the history of Islam, in which Turkey played a part. The glory of their ancestors was the glory of Mohammed, who was not a Turk at all. The Young Turks, therefore, raised a new slogan, *Turkey for the Turks*, by which they sought to develop a new race consciousness quite distinct from previous Islamic beliefs.¹

¹ See *Memoirs of Halidé Edib*, pp. 312-20.

Nationalism was to unite in a new loyalty Mohammedans, Christians, and Jews in Turkey in a great endeavour to save their country for democracy. Something of the spirit of this ideal was caught in many, even distant, parts of the Turkish empire. In large towns young men—Jews, Christians and Moslems—joined hands and marched through the streets to the cry of liberty, equality, fraternity. People rubbed their eyes with amazement as they watched these processions. Some scoffed sceptically and thought it all a game, but behind it lay the desire for a united Turkey, under a democratic government, presenting a solid front against western aggression. Turkish history was now taught from the Turkish rather than from the Islamic point of view. Pride of race was fostered as distinct from pride of religion. Patriotism was to replace fanaticism.

The Turkish language had been studied anew, and succeeded so well that within a generation students had created a simplified Turkish, which came to be used almost exclusively by journalists and others. Democracy seemed to the enthusiastic Turks the panacea for all the ills of the "red Sultan's" misrule. Men were inspired with new hopes for the future of Turkey. Like all other similar movements, the revolution depended upon the personal moral character of the leaders and upon there being sufficient moral stamina in the nation to make effective the lead given by the new heads of the state. The great mass of the people were illiterate, the country was groaning under heavy taxation, officials were steeped in bribery and corruption, the treasury was empty, and European creditors were clamouring at the offices of the government for their due dividends. In the midst of a very complicated situation the Young Turks failed to make good. Taxation under the new regime, because of past commitments, was much the same. Bribery and corruption went on because the same type of officials were in office as in the days of Abdul Hamid. The early hopes of a new unity were shattered, partly by the uprush of Moslem propaganda to defend the faith against

Christian and other influences, and partly through the deeply rooted distrust of the Christian population by the Moslem rulers. The call for national and racial solidarity met with a poor response, as the Christians felt that it would be safer to trust western powers than to throw in their lot with a new Turkish nationalism. Gradually the revolution was proved to be but the old order under a new name. Ideals were not realized, for nationhood could not be born in a day.

Into this already complicated situation came the further factor of the position in Europe—the grouping of the powers and the rivalry in armaments. Many of the Young Turks were educated in Germany, and imperialism rapidly took the place of democracy. The leaders in Turkey came more and more under Teutonic influence, and in order to consolidate their power, they threw to the wind the ideal of racial solidarity for the sake of the old pan-Islamic ideal of Abdul Hamid. Thus it came about that in 1914, when Turkey entered the war on the German side, the Young Turks were found to be the advocates of a holy war and a strong Islamic policy. A treaty was concluded between Germany and Turkey according to which Germany undertook, in the event of victory, to create an immense Moslem empire extending from Constantinople to India and embracing Egypt, Persia, and the Caucasus, thus fulfilling the dream which Abdul Hamid for over a generation had sought to make actual.

The first step after the declaration of war was to convince the whole Moslem world that this war against Russia, England and France was a *jihad* (holy war). A *fetwa* (religious decree) was promulgated by the heads of the faith declaring a *jihad* against the Entente powers. This was an astute move, as the bulk of Moslems in the world were subjects of the three powers concerned. Europe had always been nervous of the holy war threat. Pan-Islamic leaders had made a great boast of Moslem solidarity. The *jihad* was a complete failure. Beyond a

few risings, which had small effect on the war, the Moslem world refused to accept as a jihad a war that was being fought with, as Islam termed it, "infidel" Germany for an ally. A jihad is a religious war against unbelievers. In modern Moslem literature it is always spoken of as for defensive purposes only when the faith is threatened. Moslems now claim that a jihad is never aggressive, and are putting forward a new theory to suit the spirit of the age rather than aiming at historical accuracy. The jihad is established in both the Koran and the Traditions as a duty divinely imposed upon all Moslems for the purpose of spreading Islam as well as of defending the faith. The verses in the Koran about jihad are to be found in the chapters given at Medina, after Mohammed had taken up the sword for propaganda purposes !

The Koran, chap. 9, v. 5-6, says : " Kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them ; besiege them, and lay wait for them every kind of ambush : but if they shall convert and observe prayer, and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way, for God is Gracious, Merciful."

That the jihad was to be used to make Islam world-wide and to exterminate all other faiths is clear from the following verse (Koran, chap. 8, v. 39-42) : " Say to the infidels : If they desist from their unbelief, what is now past shall be forgiven them ; but if they return to it they have already before them the doom of the ancients ! Fight then against them till strife be at an end, and the religion be all of it God's." The method of procedure was for the Moslems to call upon a nation or people to accept Islam. If they refused, then God, by the sword, must decide between them. God's command was for them to be attacked and subdued. The early aggressive expansion of Islam was a jihad. The attacks on Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa could in no sense be called defensive measures. They were unwarranted acts of aggression to feed Islamic imperialistic ambitions.

Turkey began the war of 1914-1918 by an appeal to the Koran and the Traditions, by seeking to rouse all the latent fanaticism of the Moslem world against the infidel, but Turkey had a past history as well as Islam, and many countries remembered only too well all that they had suffered at the hands of the Turks. The racial feelings between Arabs and Turks asserted themselves, and the Arabs rose in rebellion and fought on the side of the allies against the Turks! It was hoped to rouse the Egyptians to rebellion, but, in spite of a widespread propaganda throughout the valley of the Nile, no one stirred. Turkey made her attack on Egypt and was driven back, and Egypt remained calm and quiet. Throughout this period Indian Moslems fought side by side with the British troops against the Turks, and before the first year of the war was ended it was clear that the bubble of pan-Islamism had been pricked. It had been a great theory, and, in an earlier age, it might have succeeded; but the thirty years that had witnessed the development of the pan-Islamic movement had also been marked by progress in other directions. Education had gone ahead by leaps and bounds, nationalism had become a watchword, world politics were coming to be viewed more from the standpoint of the interests of a nation than of the interests of Islam. Turkey, by her corruption and abuses, had lost the confidence of many leading Moslems, and the Young Turk Party, however loud in their professions, were known to be largely agnostic in their views.

In 1918, when the Armistice was signed, all hopes of a great Moslem empire were shattered. Pan-Islamism had failed completely. The war had demonstrated that the solidarity of Islam was a myth and a delusion; however strongly they might hold their faith, people placed their own personal and national interests above those of their faith.

Turkey was broken and beaten, and its empire underwent a still further process of contraction. Syria, Palestine,

and Mesopotamia were lost to Turkey. Arabia's independence was confirmed. Cyprus and Egypt were cut free from the nominal ownership of Turkey. Nothing was left of the once far-flung Ottoman empire but Asia Minor. An empire that had been as great and as powerful as that of Assyria, Persia, and Rome had vanished. The country was impoverished and demoralized. The crushing defeat of the war had brought nothing but despair to Constantinople, and the condition of Turkey was desperate and apparently hopeless. Mr Stanley Lane-Poole, writing, of course, some years before the war, said :

The most astonishing characteristic of the rule of the Turks is its vitality. Again and again its doom has been pronounced by wise prophets and still it survives. Province after province has been cut off the empire, and yet the Sultan sits supreme over wide dominions, and is revered or feared by subjects of many races. Considering how little of the great qualities of the ruler the Turk has often possessed, how little trouble he takes to conciliate the subjects whom his sword has subdued, it is amazing how firm has been his authority, how unshaken his power.¹

When 1918 closed the world thought that Turkey's star had set for ever. Nothing, it was said, could lift the Turk up again, and yet all Europe once more miscalculated Ottoman vitality, and forgot the lessons of the past. The Turk is never so great as when he is in a desperate position with the odds heavily against him, and with his back to the wall.

The first signs of new life came through the emergence of a genuine national spirit. The Turkish leaders threw over the dreams of pan-Islamism, and set out on a policy with defined and limited aims. The war had touched actual Turkish soil very little, but with the landing of the Greek troops in Asia Minor, all Turkey rose to defend the fatherland. The conditions of Europe, war-weary and

¹ S. Lane-Poole, *Turkey*, p. 74.

exhausted, helped the Turks. The rivalries and jealousies that had manifested themselves in the Peace Conferences were again an asset to Turkey. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia had turned an implacable foe into a friend and ally. Thus in 1919, when Mustapha Kemal Pasha came forward with a scheme to save his country, many conditions were favourable to his success. It was not, however, a combination of fortuitous circumstances that won the day, but the heroic faith and courage of a man who dared to defy his own Sultan, his government and the allied powers. The Treaty of Sèvres was denounced by Mustapha Kemal, who retired to Angora to consolidate his plans. The defeat of the Greek armies and the capture of Smyrna by the Turks made former treaties worthless, and Mustapha Kemal, who, in the eyes of the law, was a rebel, became virtually the ruler of the country, and compelled Europe to negotiate with him direct.

To understand what follows in Turkish history we should remember that, although the Young Turk party had been captured for imperial ambitions by a western power, yet the old ideal of nationalism on its racial side had not died, and Mustapha Kemal and his colleagues were now able to review the revolution of 1908 in a clearer light. They could trace out from its inception where the movement had failed, and there is no doubt that they saw the secret of failure in the influence of a western power which had dominated Turkish policy. They had failed because nationalism had been submerged in a pan-Islamic policy, and because Turkey, on its political side, had been associated with the Moslem world. It was natural, therefore, that the first reaction to the disaster of the war should be an awakened nationalism. In this the Christian minorities again came under review. In the eyes of Mustapha Kemal and others they had failed and had demonstrated their distrust of Ottoman democracy. Consequently, in reviving nationalism, Islam was reduced from the position of a political organism to being a religious force, and at the

same time the Christian minorities were persecuted as being an obstacle to the great objective of a united Turkey. So much perhaps may be said in excuse for the policy of exterminating Christian minorities; yet, in fairness to facts, it must be stated that, in spite of the boasted new nationalism and modernization of Turkey, the old policy of wiping out by cold-blooded calculated cruelty whole areas of Christian populations still continued under the new regime of Mustapha Kemal. During the war Christian towns were invaded by the Moslem soldiery, the young men were conscripted into the army, and the young women were taken to Turkish markets and sold as slaves for the harems. In a government blue-book on this subject Commander G. Gorrini, late Italian Consul-General at Trebizond, made the following statement :

There were about 14,000 Armenians in Trebizond, Gregorians, Catholics and Protestants. They had never caused disorder, or given occasion for corrective measures of the police. When I left Trebizond not a hundred of them remained. The passing of the gangs of Armenian exiles, their prayers for help, the lamentations, suicides, instantaneous deaths from sheer terror, the sudden unhinging of men's reason, the shooting of victims in the city, the hundreds of corpses found every day along an exile road, the children torn from their families and from Christian schools and handed over by force to Moslem families, or else placed by hundreds on board ship in nothing but shirts and then capsized and drowned in the Black Sea—these are my last ineffaceable memories of Trebizond.¹

The story of the massacres of Christians both during the war and since Mustapha Kemal came into power are too well authenticated to be denied. The enslavement of Christian girls in Moslem harems has been a common practice since the war. The girls whose parents had been killed were sold into slavery. They were branded with Moslem tribal marks, and frequently compelled to become

¹ Quoted in *The Slave Market News*, July 1925.

Moslems. We see in all this the curious mixture of good and evil which was so marked a feature in Mohammed's own life, and which has been a characteristic of Islam ever since. In the despotic days of Abdul Hamid it might be possible to understand a ruthless monster committing such atrocities, but in these post-war days, when Turkey has gained complete independence and is professing to be modern, civilized and cultured, it is difficult to see why, on any ground whatever, the Turkish government allows such things to go on. They stamp as barbarous a people who are to-day seeking emancipation and progress. It is not enough to argue that many of these things have the sanction of Moslem custom for hundreds of years. Mustapha Kemal sits very loose to custom and tradition when it suits him, and if Turkey is to take its place among the civilized nations of the world, Mustapha Kemal must see that liberty is administered equally to all his subjects, and that justice is not left to the mob rule of an unpaid soldiery. Mohammed, as we have seen, allowed his troops to take to their harems such women as fell into their clutches after a fight. Islamic history tells of many similar deeds, but to-day Moslems are holding up Islam as an ideal worthy of a civilized world. Can they wonder that the West does not take seriously their propaganda when such atrocities are still committed in the name of Islam? Enlightened Moslems plead for a better understanding between Islam and Christianity, but if they mean their plea to be considered in the West they should, in the name of their reformed faith and modern outlook, take up this question and demonstrate their sincerity.

We must pause now to ask who was the man who, in the supreme moment of his nation's need, raised his people from despair to hope, led them from defeat to victory, and turned the disaster of the Great War into the triumph of a worthy peace. Mustapha Kemal was born forty-six years ago in Salonica. From his youth he was destined for a military career, and, after passing through the military

college, was sent to join a cavalry regiment at Damascus. The fact that his boyhood was spent in the Balkans was not without its influence upon his later life. He was gripped by the new national movement in the days of Abdul Hamid, and as a subaltern he was an ardent Young Turk. He was suspected by the Constantinople authorities, and his political activities brought him imprisonment and exile. He fought throughout both the Balkan War and the Great War. He made a great name for himself at the Dardanelles, where he held up a British force at Suvla Bay, and through his skill compelled the British to evacuate Gallipoli.

After the war he saw that his country would be ruined unless he could overthrow the existing regime and drive the Sultan from the throne. He went post haste to Constantinople, and sought to create a new political party. He got himself appointed as Inspector-General of the East, and set out for Angora in Asia Minor, where he intended to make his headquarters. A National Defence Force was formed. Prisoners released by the British returned as veterans to join Mustapha Kemal. Boat-load after boat-load of prisoners of war sailed up the Syrian coast, for the British held over a hundred thousand Turkish prisoners when the Armistice was signed. In all their breasts was the stirring of a new hope. When the Turks were asked what they intended to do now the war was over they had but one answer, which was promptly given, "We are going to join Mustapha Kemal."

A congress was called at Erzerum in July 1919, and a programme drawn up for a national organization. A little group of trusted colleagues joined Mustapha in forming an executive. The national army grew, and at Angora a rival government to Constantinople was rapidly growing in power and influence. In October 1919 a national pact was drawn up, which really was a declaration of independence. In this pact they declared their policy to be the rights of the Arabs to independence, and expressed

their wish for this by a free vote of the people ; the security and protection of Constantinople, free of all European influences, as the seat of the sultanate and the caliphate ; the securing of the rights of the minorities ; and the complete independence of Turkey in its national and economic development.

Such a manifesto was scarcely what Europe expected from a broken and despairing people. Things had now gone so far and Mustapha Kemal had so captured the imagination of the people that the allied powers agreed to recognize the new parliament, but stipulated that it should meet at Constantinople under the presidency of the Sultan. In January 1920 the national pact was ratified by parliament.

The occupation of Constantinople by the allied troops led to the transfer of the National Assembly once more to Angora. Mustapha Kemal refused to call a parliament again in a city "dominated by foreigners" where the people were prisoners of the allies. In 1921 "The Law of Fundamental Organization" was passed by the National Assembly at Angora. It stated that sovereignty belonged to the people only, and was no longer in the hands of a single Sultan. Sovereignty would be exercised by a Chamber of Deputies elected by the people every two years. All the functions of the Sultan were to be vested in the Assembly, and ministers were to be appointed only by the Assembly. Under this law the Assembly had all power to declare war, make peace, and sign treaties.

The allies still misinterpreted the new spirit of nationalism and, in October 1922, continued to recognize the old regime. A note addressed by the allies to the Ottoman government inviting them to send delegates to the proposed Lausanne Conference brought matters to a head, and Mustapha Kemal, now feeling strong enough to meet the crisis, forced the issue, and drove the Sultan out of Turkey. The dual government, which had existed ever since 1920, was now terminated. Henceforth Europe had

to deal with one government, a united Turkey, under a bold and determined leader. The Treaty of Lausanne gave Turkey the whole of Eastern Thrace, including Adrianople, thus once more establishing a Turkish foothold in Europe. Again the politicians were at fault. The "sick man" had recovered, and in four years had so far regained his strength as to repel a Greek invasion, and to rise out of hopeless despair to a position where he virtually dictated terms to Europe. The allied armies were now withdrawn from Constantinople. The French had previously (1921) evacuated Cilicia, so Turkey extended after Lausanne from the river Maritza in Thrace to the borders of Syria. The abolition of the Capitulations was recognized by the powers, and many other demands were also conceded. Turkey had scored a great diplomatic victory.

CHAPTER VIII

THE IMPACT OF WESTERNISM UPON OTTOMAN ISLAM

DURING the war I was quartered at a large military camp in the desert east of Egypt. Near by were the camel transport lines, and day by day we watched the loading of the ungainly brutes as they were being prepared for a long trek towards the front line. The camel is a law-abiding and patient animal up to a point, and under the hand of those who know its whims and fancies gives little trouble; but during the war the camel came in contact with westerners who had not penetrated into the subtle workings of eastern thought. A camel will accept a certain weight with little protest; increase this and gurgling murmurs of protest are heard. Impose upon the camel and add even more weight and the time soon comes when it takes action.

I watched such a scene. The dogged determination of the British Tommy was pitted against the superior skill of an unaffectionate camel. The Tommy, anxious to get on with the job, piled on supplies or guns until the camel, feeling that it was being mishandled and abused, decided that it must assert itself and maintain its dignity as king of the desert. The Tommy cursed and swore at the camel, told it in the best East-end style what he thought of it, while the camel groaned, and in its own tongue uttered desert expletives. A crisis came. With a bound the camel rose, shook itself, and commenced a thoroughgoing rebellion against the established order of things. Its hind legs went up in the air, a piece of a gun fell off, and in a few moments the camel's back was freed of its western impedimenta. Then the fun began. The Tommy—

incensed against such inexplicable conduct after he had fed the camel dutifully for months—tried force. Blows fell on the thick hide of the animal, but this only made the situation worse, and the camel, thoroughly out of hand, careered away through the camp. Tent ropes were ripped up as the great beast sprawled about. Tents collapsed, and confusion reigned. Men ran from all quarters of the camp to quell the revolt, and after a heated chase the runaway was captured. The camel was reloaded, this time with the correct weight, and soon was peacefully plodding across the desert, doing its bit for the allied cause.

Sultans in their autocracy and power had loaded the patient Turkish peasantry with taxes, and burdened them with misrule and injustice until, as we have seen, a crisis came. The impedimenta of an effete regime was cast aside and the Turks in their new-found freedom attacked all who stood in their pathway to liberty. Nothing that Europe did was right; Islam had led Turkey astray; pan-Islamism was a danger to nationalism; time-honoured customs were a drag on the wheels of progress. In fact, Turkey at this stage was remarkably like the camel which, having dislodged its load, was seen careering through the camp to the dismay of the army. The whole Moslem world focused its attention on Turkey, and watched with the keenest interest, not unmingled with anxiety, the changes that were taking place. India at first applauded the movement, no doubt thinking that in the Indian caliphate movement there was sufficient influence to curb excesses and control the new revolution in the interests of Islam; but it was soon found that the tents of the Indian caliphate movement toppled over just as easily as those in the camps of western diplomacy.

Turkey had begun the Great War with the cry—"Islam in danger, defend the faith." She emerged from it with the new slogan of "Turkey for the Turks." As the movement grew this became something more than a mere slogan. It represented an ambition that was shared by

all ranks of society, and was the expression of a new national consciousness, a new unity and loyalty, and, for this reason, it raised Mustapha Kemal from the position of an officer in the army to that of virtual dictator of his country. Can Turkey ever be the same again? If the changes were simply of a military nature, we might say "Yes," it will revert in time to the old type; but the new outlook in Turkey has affected, as we shall see, every form of life. Social, religious, economic changes have taken place that have cut deep into the traditions of the past, and have set Turkey on a new road towards reform and westernization. Mustapha set out to pull down many of the old and time-honoured institutions of the Ottoman empire. The abolition of the sultanate took place in November 1922, and excited very little surprise in Turkey itself. The decree was very brief. In terse language it ran, "The Turkish people considers the form of government in Constantinople, which is based upon the sovereignty of an individual, as being obsolete from the 16th of March 1920, onwards for ever."¹ The Sultan and his ministers were charged with high treason and an order was issued for their arrest. The Sultan escaped on a British gunboat and the ministers fled. The National Assembly then elected, as caliph only, Abdul Mejid, a cousin of the deposed Sultan.

It will be remembered that in the 1908 rebellion the Young Turks placed great emphasis upon the Turkish language and brought the spoken language of the people into literature and the press. They had never, however, seriously interfered with the sacred rule of using Arabic for all religious purposes. Prayers throughout the Moslem world were said in Arabic, and no deviation from this law had ever been allowed. It is significant of the sweeping reforms that were to follow that, at the investiture of the new caliph, the prayers were said in Turkish and not in Arabic. The significance of this change was lost to the western world, but Moslems everywhere were aghast at

¹ Quoted in *Turkey*, by A. J. Toynbee and K. P. Kirkwood, p. 180.

the decision. Turkish preferred to the language of Heaven—"God forbid," they exclaimed! But it was all part of a far-reaching programme, the ideals of which were expounded in 1908, for a new and racial nationalism that would place Turkish interests above Islamic claims and would change Turkey from an international religious state without frontiers into a compact nationality with a new race consciousness. Turkey as a state was now founded upon Turkish nationality rather than upon Islam. The new caliph was shorn of all political power, and although he was "the bearer of the mantle of the Prophet" he was only a figure-head and was appointed as a sop to the religious feelings of the people, who could not imagine Turkey without a caliph.

The deposing of the sultan marked a definite stage in the new order of things. It was proclaimed as the beginning of a democratic era. This was followed up in October 1928 by the declaration of a republic in Turkey. In tracing the causes of so violent a change from the traditional form of government we would give due weight to the fact that many young Turks were educated in France and Germany; but it should be remembered also that the most efficient education in Turkey itself for many years was that provided by the American missionaries at the Robert College, Constantinople, the American University of Beyrout, and similar institutions. While it is true that Turkey has adopted republicanism of a French rather than of an American type, yet ideas of liberty and constitutional government must often have been imbibed by the Turks in their boyhood days from American sources.

The republic was greeted with a storm of enthusiastic delight, and Mustapha Kemal Pasha was elected unanimously as first president. Many are still sceptical whether Turkey can change over so suddenly from an age-long monarchical autocracy to a full-blown republic. The lessons from other lands all show that the process is slow and difficult, and Turkey has before her many obstacles

and dangers to pass before she will reach the tranquil waters of settled democratic government. In other countries republicanism has been a movement of the people ; it has sprung out of the very soil of the land, and the evolution of ideas has been gradual. In Turkey's case, the republic has been imposed upon the people from above. It has not been in any sense a popular democratic growth, but rather a forced plant. The key to the enigma lies in the personality of one strong man—Mustapha Kemal. He is the republic. The future depends very largely, if not entirely, upon him.

The new republic abandoned Constantinople with its strategic world-position, its historical associations, its unrivalled scenery and beauty, its great mosques with their domes and minarets, and all its romantic lure, for Angora, an insignificant town in Asia Minor. Constantinople was cosmopolitan with its mixture of Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Syrians, and Levantines, and it was associated with every form of western diplomacy in the minds of the Turks. Foreigners very largely ran the city. Its trams, telephones, electric power were all in the hands of foreign companies. The Ottoman Bank itself was a Franco-British concern. To abandon this ancient capital was, therefore, a part of Mustapha Kemal's policy for complete nationalization of the country. It was an effort to cut adrift from the old dependence upon foreign help, initiative, and support. Constantinople was the home of the sultans and it stood for Ottoman rule and all its western ramifications. The early home of the Turks, long before they had reached empire status, was in the Anatolian hills. Angora is the ancient Ancyra, and still contains, in fine preservation, the Temple of Augustus. To recapture the spirit and glory of old Turkey the leaders of the republic took their people back to their ancestral home. To re-establish the virility of a people who had once dominated half the world, the bracing mountain air of Anatolia was preferred to the enervating influences of the Bosphorus.

The republic was not yet six months old when a second revolutionary change took place. On 3rd March 1924 the historical caliphate was abolished. It will be remembered that when the caliph-sultan was deposed a cousin was appointed caliph with no political powers. His office was purely spiritual, a form of the caliphate entirely unknown in Moslem history. Islam never had drawn any distinction between the spiritual and temporal powers of the caliph. He had been the military defender of the faith and the political head of Islam. Church and state were one in Islam. The laws of the one were the laws of the other, and there never was any conscious distinction between the two. The head of the faith had been the commander of the faithful. Caliphs had ruled by conquest vast dominions and empires. They had at times degenerated into puppets in the hands of the military leaders, but they had never acted in the capacity of a pope or patriarch with spiritual functions to perform. The caliphate had for a long time been a shadowy institution with ill-defined responsibilities. Mustapha Kemal, when he appointed a caliph with spiritual office only, may have had in mind a possible analogy with the organization of the Greek or Roman Church. Whether this is so or not it took less than six months to convince him that what obtained in Christendom would not necessarily work in Islam. Once temporal power had been taken away the caliphate existed only in name. It was a mere husk ready to be blown away by the first wind from Angora. The sultan, in his pan-Islamic propaganda, had tried to give spiritual significance to his office as caliph, and at one time he informed the Chinese government that, as the spiritual head of the Moslems in China, he was responsible for their welfare—a claim that the government of China instantly repudiated. This, however, was nothing more than a political move, and never met with any serious response in the Moslem world. The problem which Mustapha Kemal had to face was whether the caliphate,

along with other institutions, could be westernized. If not, it was doomed. Could it function on the spiritual plane alone? If not, it would be a rival power to the republic and would ultimately lead to a clash between the representatives of the state and the forces of Islam. Mustapha Kemal's programme contained many things with which orthodox Islam must strongly disagree. The caliph, once he was established strongly in the affections of the people, might precipitate a movement that would threaten the very life of the republic. He could not, as caliph, have acquiesced in an anti-Moslem movement and still have claimed to uphold the traditions of Islam. Added to this was the further danger that the new caliph was actually a member of the royal family and the House of Othman. The president of the Turkish republic, in March 1924, simply announced that as the caliph had been stripped of all power he was to be expelled from the country, and a few days later the caliph and his family left Turkey to seek retirement in Christian Europe!

So the Ottoman dynasty, that had ruled in Constantinople ever since the capture of the city in 1453, passed out of existence. This dynasty had sprung from a nomadic tribe; it had carved out a great empire, and created the Ottoman state. The people, proud of it, had called themselves Osmanlis, after the ruling family. Now, by one brief decree at Angora, the glory of the Ottomans disappeared. Out of the ashes of a broken empire there sprang up a republic on western lines, freed from the traditions of a great imperial and historical past.

The very word "Ottoman" now disappears from all official documents in Turkey. The House of Othman, once the great pillar of the Moslem world, has vanished. The dynasty that at one time threatened to engulf all Europe and which long battered at the gates of Vienna has succumbed to influences from those very western lands which it once sought to subdue. The House of Othman established itself in Europe long years ago. The wheels

of time grind slowly, but nevertheless surely, and the greatest triumph of the Ottomans has, after nearly five hundred years, proved to be their undoing. Ultimately, western influence was bound to penetrate into the life of Turkey with the inevitable result of the overthrow of sultan and monarchy. So great has been the reaction against the old regime that when the caliph, the last of the House of Othman, was ordered to leave Turkey, no voice was raised in protest, and the comic papers of the day made the one-time caliph the object of ridicule and scorn. What a contrast! In 1453 Mohammed II, of the House of Othman, entered Constantinople, and he did so as the proud conqueror of the great city. In 1924, the last of a great dynasty was ignominiously exiled from his native soil. Nationalism, as Abdul Hamid years before had seen, had proved the ruin of his family. The rule of the Ottomans is ended, but Turkey, free and democratic, lives to work out her own destiny unfettered by sultans and their autocratic power.

The abolition of the caliphate meant that Turkey voluntarily gave up the prestige and influence that its being the centre of Islamic authority gave it. Islamic unity was sacrificed for Turkish solidarity. Pan-Islamism was thrown over because of its failure in the Great War and because Moslems, particularly Arab and Indian, instead of rallying to Turkish assistance, fought against Turkey. Thus the Turk lost all faith in Islamic unity as a political force. He came to view it rather as an incubus involving sacrifices that weakened Turkish nationalism with no compensating return.

To the rest of the Moslem world the caliph's expulsion from Turkey came as a shattering blow to hopes and dreams of a future Moslem confederation. To the non-Moslem world this change of policy is not without significance. The caliphate was the symbol of a religious autocracy that divided the world into two classes, the believers and the infidels. In theory, the House of Islam was a unity, an

empire without frontiers. Peace reigned within it, but a permanent state of war existed theoretically towards all without, namely the "infidels." The theory was that this state of war would continue until no "infidels" were left and all would be Moslems, with a theocratic church-state co-extensive with the world. Of course, this has never been more than a theory. Unity within the House of Islam has always proved to be impossible. The idea of permanent war with the rest of the world was carried out in the early days of Moslem expansion, but it was abandoned by Turkey as a theory calculated to combine the rest of the world against Islam. The caliphate, however, did accentuate the religious gulf in Moslem faith and practice between the Moslem believer and the infidel. The abolition of the caliphate may yet mean a more humane attitude on the part of Turkey towards non-Moslem people, although, as yet, the republic has shown no signs of a change of heart as far as minorities are concerned. The old methods, so common in Abdul Hamid's time, of crushing opposition by hanging, is developing almost into a daily pastime in Angora. The Committee of Independence holds its assizes regularly, and short shrift is given to anyone suspected of disloyalty to the republican cause. High gallows are erected at the cross-roads in Angora, and it is a common sight to see swinging in the wind the bodies of men who at one time were leaders in Turkey. Their crime is that they formed an opposition to the parliamentary party in power. Mustapha Kemal claims to be progressive and liberal, and yet his autocracy is as great as any exercised by the sultans of old. A parliament sits at Angora, but no one dares to oppose the dictator. To criticize a bill is to lay oneself open to the charge of being reactionary, and to be reactionary ultimately leads to the gallows.

One of the curious ironies of the post-war situation is that a war, which was to make the world safe for democracy, has resulted in dictatorships in so many countries—dictatorships which are exercised in the name of democ-

racy. Russia boasts of the proletariat, and yet a small group of men control the country and ruthlessly beat down all opposition. Italy has followed the same method while opposing the principles for which Russia stands. The points of view are poles apart, yet the method is much the same. Greece, not long ago, shot a whole Cabinet of ministers in the name of progress and reform, and Turkey hangs its statesmen in the open street while children play games below the gallows, and the grown-ups pass to their work indifferent and unconcerned.

The atrocities around Mosul showed how little change had taken place in Turkish mentality. The stories given by eye-witnesses—the destruction of villages, the shooting of men and the rape of the women—are much the same as those witnessed in Armenia both before and during the war. Mustapha Kemal may abolish the veil for women and change the men's hats, he may alter Islamic customs, and blaze abroad his progressive reforms, but so far he has not changed the heart of the Turk. So much of Mustapha's programme is sound reform that there is hope that the movements he is initiating may mark a stage towards the true nationalization of Turkey with liberty in its best sense guaranteed for all. The national movement has already placed Turkey in a position of independence, freed alike from eastern domination and Islamic conservatism. Can Turkey by progressive stages rise in civilization until the horrors that have marked her history for so long, and which still are a feature of Turkish life, become a forgotten memory? Only thus will she be able to take her place alongside the great European nations as one of a world-wide family.¹

¹ A Turk said, "A cloak cut and modelled for Arabia has been forcefully put round our necks and has kept us to our bedsteads, so preventing the free development of our normal and national abilities. . . . The Arabs have ruined us by forcing upon us a God of their own creation. This does not lack some good and noble qualities, but He has attributes that have paralysed our national and normal growth. Our minds have remained puzzled in the midst of contradictions."—Quoted in *An Eastern Palimpsest*, by O. Wyon, p. 22.

The abolition of the caliphate by Turkey did not mean that the rest of the Moslem world would tamely accept the position. A storm of criticism broke out and Mustapha Kemal was accused of betraying the cause of Islam. His Highness the Agar Khan, and the Right Honourable Ameer Ali, wrote a letter addressed to the prime minister, appealing to Turkey on behalf of the whole Moslem world, for a reconsideration of the caliphate question. The letter appeared in the leading newspapers in Constantinople, and Mustapha Kemal quickly showed that he would brook no interference from outside, nor countenance any criticism within the country. To India he retorted hotly that Indian Islam had done nothing for Turkey in the Great War, and he could not allow India now to interfere with Turkish affairs. To the newspapers he replied by arresting, on a charge of treason, three editors, who were condemned to penal servitude.

Indian Islam had for years advocated the cause of Turkey. Leading Indians had used all their influence to keep British policy pro-Turkish, and after the Armistice they pressed strongly the necessity for treating Turkey leniently if England wished to retain the sympathy of the Moslem world. The caliphate was used as the great argument. Turkey, they said, was sacrosanct because the Sultan was head of the faith. England was accused of plotting to overthrow the caliphate and to disintegrate Islam. India had committed itself up to the hilt on the caliphate policy and as a reward found itself completely nonplussed, not by England, the supposed arch-enemy of Islam, but by Turkey itself. The Turks had renounced their claim to the caliphate, rejected Indian help, and thus forfeited the support and influence which they had hitherto received from Moslems the world over. It became clear that the caliphate and nationalism could not go together, that westernism and pan-Islamism were incompatible, that orthodoxy and modernism were contradictory, that Koranic law and the new legislation were in conflict; and Turkey,

having made its choice, deliberately turned its back upon its old friends in India and rejected for the future the whole Islamic policy as a hindrance to Turkish progress, culture, and civilization. Turkey, said Mustapha Kemal, had come through the chaos of the war, not because of any help that Moslems had given them, but in spite of Islam, which had for centuries hindered true development. One leading Turk declared that Turkey would have fared better if it had never become Moslem at all.

The political transformation would never have succeeded had it not been linked closely to a great social revolution. The caliphate question and Islam were not only bound up with politics but were indissolubly linked with the whole Islamic social system ; and the revolt of educated Turkey against the social code of Islam was in some ways stronger than the opposition to the burden of political Mohammedanism. Contact with the West, the flood of new ideas, the intellectual ferment, the new demands for education, a new literacy, and the influence of the press, all tended to awaken Turkey out of the torpor of self-satisfaction with things as they were in Islam, and to create new aspirations for life upon a broader basis than simply religion.

The leaven had been working underground for a long time. Men and women alike sought for new opportunities of self-expression, better conditions of life, juster laws and social equality for the sexes. The magic watchword liberty came to have a deeper significance to the women than simply political freedom. They wanted liberty to live their own lives in their own way, unfettered by the laws of a seventh-century prophet. They hated what they called a forced morality imposed upon them by regulations for the veil, the harem, the separation of the sexes and the seclusion of women. The fiery zeal of the reformers swept away the harem, the eunuch system, polygamy and many other Islamic customs. The western world judges the civilization of any race very largely by its attitude to women, and if this test be applied to Turkey, then the

Turks are making wonderful strides in this direction. Polygamy has been forbidden by law except under certain defined circumstances. The seclusion of women has vanished, and child-marriages are no longer possible. The example of the Prophet, who was betrothed to his favourite wife Ayesha when she was a child of eight, and married to her when she was ten, has been rejected in favour of the general European custom of marriages from the age of sixteen and upwards. The women began to agitate for equality, and a law passed by the Angora Assembly gives equal rights of divorce to both sexes.

For some years Turkish women had been protesting against their seclusion from the professions. The conservative and Islamic section had bitterly opposed them, yet they forced their way forward until they were accepted as students in medicine, science and law. Women in the old days seen in the streets unveiled were regarded as bad characters, subjected to insults, and were always objects of suspicion. At last they decided to risk the charge of immodesty by appearing in public in European dress. The Great War brought in Turkey, as in the West, many changes into the life of women. Turkish girls participated actively in war work as nurses, and in the Red Crescent Society. They took the place of men in shops and offices. The ability of the women to fill these posts was soon demonstrated by the testing of the war, and after experiences such as these, the old days of seclusion came to an end for ever.

In 1923 an Education Act included a clause for compulsory education of both girls and boys. Co-education has been established, and in the Constantinople College women are now on an equal footing with men. A visitor to Constantinople to-day would miss the old Arabian Nights' atmosphere, and the prevalence of many customs, so marked a feature in the old days. Girls in the latest Parisian costumes dance at the large hotels, husbands walk arm-in-arm with their wives through the streets. Cinemas

and theatres are thronged with women who mix freely with the men. Yet if the visitor saw only these outward symbols and changes he would miss the whole spirit of the renaissance that has inspired Turkey. Behind all this lies the more solid work of social service. "The Women's Association," formed to uphold the cause of women, is carrying on an interesting piece of work for the poor and the illiterate. The association has arranged for weekly talks to women to be given by women in the mosques. The subjects include the Turkish revolution and the position of women in it, economic conditions for women, management of family affairs, good health, the care of children, etc. The association is working for the uplift of Turkish women by teaching them trades. It publishes a newspaper of its own with articles on the rights of women and kindred subjects. In its activity for public morality it is seeking to obtain the appointment of women inspectors of cinemas and places of public amusement.

It must not be imagined that these changes are finding general acceptance throughout Turkey: in the more outlying places things have really changed very little so far. In one town, where some actors were giving a performance to illustrate the value of Turkish women taking up careers of their own, the people were summoned to attend by proclamation. They did so, but were shocked to find that men and women had to sit together, a procedure that caused some immediately to retire. Customs cannot be changed in a day, and the stolid peasants of the country are slow to adjust themselves to the new conditions.

In the realm of sport Turkish girls are competing with their western sisters. They are throwing themselves into every form of athletics, and the Ladies' Union Club recently organized races for girls in which they competed over a six-mile course! There are now rowing clubs, women's hockey clubs, mixed bathing, and every form of amusement known in the West.

The progress of reform has been like a wireless wave

spreading in all directions and penetrating through every hidden recess of the old life and traditions. The ecclesiastical schools were among the first to go. They were institutions for the teaching of the Koran and the Moham-medan faith. They had vast endowments and properties, and by an order from Angora they were all confiscated for the use of the state, and the endowments transferred to the Treasury. As we have already seen, the strength of Islam has been in its Dervish orders, and the zeal for the faith which these orders have engendered. The Dervishes looked upon the reforms with horror. Their influence was considerable, especially among the poorer classes, and again Angora stepped in and abolished all Dervish monasteries, orders and corporations. Even the familiar dress was forbidden. Henceforth, no Dervish or similar religious order was to be allowed in the republic, and some ten thousand Dervishes were thrown upon the streets to swell the number of reactionary malcontents.

The changes are perhaps best seen at the great Moslem festivals. The Fast of Ramadan was always compulsory in the days of the sultan, and punishment swiftly overtook any who openly broke the Islamic law. To-day the fast is optional, and work goes on as in any other month of the year. Shops are now open and government offices keep the same hours as in other months. The state has laid down that it does not interfere in matters of faith and conscience, which are for the individual alone to settle. The close of the fast used to be a time of religious rejoicing. Now it is marked by the attractions of the cinema, the dance and the theatre.

How far things have moved can be seen from the following pronouncement by Rifat Effendi, the Head of Religious Affairs in 1925 :

I am one of those who have unconditionally received the form of government accepted by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. There is nothing more natural and logical than the separation of religion and worldly affairs.

Religion is a command of conscience, and a matter pertaining to the future life. Its being mixed and tangled very often with the work of the world is a great hindrance to the higher spiritual life. Therefore, the separation of these is necessary, and also very suitable. I cannot refuse to recommend the people to receive this with favour.

The custom of taking off the shoes or slippers on entering a mosque became difficult to follow where European boots were worn, and Turkey again was equal to the occasion. It was pronounced to be a local custom of the Arabs, suitable to life in Arabia where most men went about barefoot, and permission was given to Turks to enter mosques in future with their boots on ! The time-honoured head-dress of the Turks—the fez—has disappeared. The third anniversary of the republic was marked by a proclamation making the wearing of the fez illegal, and when the Assembly met, all the members were wearing top-hats and tail-coats. Police were ordered to search the houses for the accursed thing and destroy it. The fez was as distinctive for men as the veil for women. It was the symbol of Ottoman rule. Every official of the sultan had to wear it, and Mustapha Kemal, seeking to eradicate all traces of Ottoman rule, banned the fez, and dire punishment was threatened to any who wore it. Anyone seen wearing a fez was mobbed, and in a few days the picturesque headgear disappeared from the streets, and every form of ugly European hat took its place.

Mustapha Kemal had, in Cromwell-like manner, carried his dictatorship with a high hand. The whole machinery of the state had been revolutionized, and the social systems turned upside down. Could this continue without reaction ? People predicted the assassination of the President, and the overthrow of the republic. The smouldering discontent found a response in Kurdistan. The Kurds, numbering over a million, were still within the jurisdiction of Turkey after the war. They are largely illiterate and do not speak the Turkish language. Racially they are

separate from the Turks, and have not, from the first, shared any of the Turkish national sentiments. The reforms in Turkey stirred all their latent fanaticism. They sought autonomy and independence, and viewed Turkish control as alien. Their faith was in danger, and they began to organize a revolt against the "atheists" of Angora. In February 1925 the rebellion burst into flame, and rapidly spread through Kurdistan. The Kurds advanced to battle with copies of the Koran tied to their bayonets, and the leader of the rebellion, Sheikh Said, in a proclamation called upon all Kurds to rise against the irreligious government of the republic :

We are going to restore the caliphate. Islam cannot exist without the caliph as spiritual chief. No caliph has ever been expelled by any government except the Turkish republic. It is our religion which makes us powerful and feared, and we must restore the caliphate, Koranic laws, religious schools, and veils for women. The present Turkish government has continually attacked our religion. Turkish women are now all uncovered. Atheism progresses in our schools. The Turkish regime must be overthrown.

The programme was certainly Islamic, but not all the fanaticism and orthodox Islam in Turkey and Kurdistan could stem the tide of progress. The rebel tribes were subdued and their leaders executed. The remarkable thing was how little the rebellion disturbed Turkey itself. If the orthodox in Turkey sympathized with the Kurds they never showed it, and one great result of the rising was to unite the Turks more closely in their determination to defend the republic.

Mustapha Kemal was alive to the strong reactionary opposition, and drastic measures followed the rising. The press was still further gagged and made the mouthpiece of government policy. A bill was passed through the Assembly making it high treason for anyone to use religion as a means of arousing popular sentiment. A strong

military control was established at Angora. The preachers in the mosques were forbidden to teach anything that might be subversive of the state. The dictatorship was strengthened, and once more opposition was crushed or driven underground by the terrors of this democratic republic which decreed hanging for all who opposed in the slightest way the policy of the government of the day.

Turkey at Lausanne ratified a treaty which declares that "all inhabitants of Turkey should be entitled to the free exercise, whether in public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, the observance of which shall not be incompatible with public order and good morals." This profession of religious liberty has so far not made it possible for anyone to change his faith. A Moslem who becomes a Christian is still persecuted, not on the old grounds of the Koranic injunction but because a man should be satisfied with the religion he has and should not wish to change it!

We began our study by tracing the expansion of Islam into a non-Moslem world. Islam met the Turks while they were nomads on trek in search of a home. Out of the tribe grew the nation, and with its growth in power grew also the fame and glory of Islam. Racially the Turanian Turks had little in common with the Arabs. And, as they supplanted the Arabs in their bid for supremacy in the Moslem world, there existed a constant feud between the two. The Turks have been called the British of the Near East. Even in the days of the worst autocracy of the sultan, the Turk was ever seeking to rise and progress. Neither the dull uniformity of Islam, nor the fettering demands of orthodoxy ever suited the Turkish temperament. His alert and inquiring mind was ever seeking new sources of knowledge, and when the universities of Europe were made available to him he leapt into a new world of thought and activity from which he never looked back.

The struggle between conservative reaction and liberal progress was long and difficult, but the ultimate result was a foregone conclusion. The triumph of the progressives

has meant incalculable loss to Islam. Its prestige, solidarity, laws, institutions and customs have all suffered in the change. Pan-Islamism, after a stormy career, has been broken up by the waves of a new patriotic nationalism. Moslem authority has been replaced by a democratic Assembly. Moslem law has been revoked in favour of new and western legislation, and the decrees of God (as Moslems believe the Koran to be) have been rejected as obsolete, out-of-date, and unsuited to present-day needs. Islam has been tested by the most Moslem country in the world, and in the light of western thought and culture, in the light of Turkey's present-day needs, in the light of the demands of women for emancipation, it has been found inadequate.

CHAPTER IX

ISLAM IN THE PAGAN WORLD

IN the days when the followers of Mohammed were being persecuted in Mecca before the flight to Medina, the Prophet, pointing to Abyssinia, said to his brethren, "Yonder is a land of righteousness. Depart thither until the Lord shall open out for us a way." Thus it came about that Africa provided a home of refuge for the fugitives. Others, on hearing of the kindly way in which the Christian king had received them, crossed the Red Sea, and there were about a hundred Moslems at the court of the Abyssinian king.

Another link which Islam had with Africa in those early days was formed when the governor of Egypt sent two Christian slaves as a present to Mohammed. "The gift," says Sir William Muir, "was well suited to the Prophet's taste. Mary, the fairest of the damsels, was kept for himself," and to her was born the only son that Mohammed ever had. This African slave girl was the cause of serious jealousy in Mohammed's harem, and the other wives indulged in something like a revolt until a special revelation was given by God to the Prophet as a warning to Ayesha, Haphsa and others. The wives were told to repent and were threatened with divorce lest "Haply if he put you both away his Lord will give him [Mohammed] in exchange other wives better than you, submissive unto God, believing and pious."¹

It was not until A.D. 640 that the Moslem armies turned their attention seriously to Africa. Omar's troops had

¹ Koran, chap. 66, v. 5.

invaded Palestine, and Amr, the Arab general, now decided to march on Egypt. The country was conquered without serious difficulty and in 641 "Egypt passed under the Moslem yoke, from which—whether under Arab, Circassian, or Turk—she has never since been able to free herself and which slowly but surely has crushed out her art, her civilization, her learning, her religion and wellnigh her very life; for of the four million who make up the present population of Egypt, there are barely seven hundred thousand who can claim beyond dispute to be the true descendants of the ancient Egyptians, and the enduring witness, through centuries of persecution, for the faith of Christ." ¹

The capture of Alexandria and the Delta gave the Moslems a base for further operations. Egypt was to be the spear-head for an advance into the interior of the great continent of mystery. To the Arab leader two routes seemed to be possible: the first up the Nile Valley south into the Sudan, where safety was secured by the great river; the other along the coast of North Africa. Operations in Egypt having been successfully concluded, Amr now received orders from the caliph, Omar, to push his troops south towards Nubia and west through Tripoli. An army was sent up the Nile and soon found the Nubians no mean foes. Their archery terrified even the Arabs, and although the Moslems triumphed in the end, it is recorded that they did not take a single prisoner, for the Nubians fought to the death. The Moslem force penetrated as far south as Dongola, then a Christian country. In the treaty that was concluded the foundations of the Moslem slave-trade in Africa were laid. It was stipulated that three hundred and sixty slaves of both sexes (none of whom were to be aged or children below the age of puberty) were to be delivered annually to the Moslem governor of Assouan. The actual words of this treaty are worth quoting:

¹ *The Story of the Church of Egypt*, E. L. Butcher, vol. i. p. 370.

In the Name of God. . . . This is a treaty granted by the Emir Abdullah ibn Saad to the Chief of the Nubians, and to all the people of his dominions, a treaty binding on great and small among them, from the frontier of Assouan to the frontier of Alwa. . . . Ye people of Nubia, ye shall dwell in safety under the safeguard of God and his apostle, Mohammed, the prophet, whom God bless and save. . . . Ye shall take care of the mosque which the Moslems have built in the outskirts of your city and hinder none from praying there. Ye shall clean it and light it and honour it. Every year ye shall pay three hundred and sixty head of slaves to the leader of the Moslems, of the middle class of slaves of your country, without bodily defects, males and females; but no old men nor old women nor young children. . . . If ye kill a Moslem or an ally or attempt to destroy the mosque which the Moslems have built or withhold any of the three hundred and sixty head of slaves then we shall revert to hostility until God decide between us, and He is the best of umpires.¹

The Nubians reasserted and maintained their independence in spite of repeated expeditions against them from Egypt. Arab efforts to penetrate into the interior, by the Nile route, were a complete failure. They did not succeed in pushing their conquests much beyond the first cataract. Christianity at an earlier date had spread south of Khartoum up both the Blue and the White Nile. The Sudanese for centuries blocked the way for Islam. In the fourteenth century the Nubians were apparently still Christians, but Moslem traders and others were assiduously preaching their faith. The conversion of the northern Sudan tribes was gradual and more in the nature of a drift than caused by any compelling strength of Islam. The root cause of the losses sustained by Christianity in the Sudan is in fact to be found in the low spiritual state of the Church. The Nubian Christians were isolated and cut off. Egypt was in the hands of the Arabs, and the clergy became corrupt and indifferent to the spiritual

¹ Quoted in *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, H. A. MacMichael, vol. i. p. 157.

needs of their flocks. For a time they seemed to exist without a faith yet with a pathetic desire to remain Christians. A traveller in the sixteenth century relates that there were still one hundred and fifty churches in Nubia. The next hundred years marks the entire disappearance of the Christian faith from the country. The Nubians had surrendered to the appeals of Islam and from that time all traces of a living Church disappear. The Moslems gradually penetrated up the Nile through Dongola and south to about 10° latitude. Here the pagan tribes again checked all advance. Swamps and jungle, mountains and forests, inhabited by wild savage races, blocked the road, and Islam has to this day never succeeded in penetrating beyond this point. The interior of Africa was to remain pagan until Stanley, Livingstone and others explored it and Christian missions established the Church in the heart of the continent.

We must now return to the main thread of our story and trace the advance of the Moslem armies in North Africa. A second force under Abdullah, the foster-brother of the Caliph Omar, marched in 647 from Egypt to Tripoli, and from there on into Tunisia. This first attack was short-lived owing to dissensions in Egypt, but the following year Ukbar led his army to Carthage and took it by storm. He then carried his victorious sword the whole length of North Africa until he looked out upon the Atlantic Ocean.

All North Africa in the seventh century was Christian, and the Moslems not only captured the country but uprooted and completely destroyed the Christian Church. It is a staggering fact that a Church which had been famous for its piety and learning, its solid organization, and its great theologians, was swept out of existence. It boasted of Tertullian, Cyprian and St Augustine. It had withstood Roman persecution and pagan invasion, and yet it gradually crumbled away before the steady pressure of Moslem propaganda.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the Arabs found

the Church in the flourishing condition of Cyprian's day. The Vandals had overrun North Africa and the orthodox Christians had suffered untold miseries and persecutions. When in the sixth century the Vandals were crushed and North Africa was restored to the Roman Empire the Church was very much reduced. The restoration of peace brought with it a renewal of theological controversies and bitter strife which further weakened the Church. The following century began the completion of a catastrophe which had opened with the Vandal invasion and had continued through Church dissensions and schisms. The Moslem army not only sacked the towns which it captured; it drove the inhabitants into slavery in Egypt and Arabia. Christians taking refuge in flight crossed over into Italy and Spain in hundreds. Flourishing cities were in ruins and the Church sank under the weight of a succession of calamities which ended in the extinction of Christianity there, and the complete domination of Islam throughout North Africa.

The contacts of Islam with Africa up to this point had been almost entirely with Christian communities.¹ The Arabs had now reached the point where they must present their faith to an uncivilized, illiterate and pagan people. The Moslem army made many converts in its victorious march. This is seen from the fact that when in 711 Tarik invaded Spain he had under his command twelve thousand Berbers, converts to Islam. Great care was taken to instruct those who joined the Moslem ranks. One of the generals spent large sums of money on the purchase of slaves who were willing to embrace Islam. If they showed ability and talent and proved themselves worthy sons of Islam they received their liberty and often rose to high rank in the army.

The conversion of the Berbers was the starting-point for an advance into pagan Africa.

By the beginning of the eleventh century North Africa

¹ See *France, Spain and the Rif*, W. B. Harris, p. 27.

had entirely passed under Moslem rule. Important centres of Koranic learning had been established and the people were being instructed in the faith. The pilgrimage was becoming a factor in the expansion of Islam. The conversion of Berber tribes was increasing rapidly. It was in the early part of this century that a chief of a Berber tribe, returning from Mecca, was fired with zeal for the Islamizing of his people. He sought out a learned Moslem as a teacher, one Abdullah ibn Yassin, and installed him in the tribe. He laboured for a time without result. The people could not conform to his strict discipline nor were his denunciations of their vices to their liking. Utterly discouraged at their obstinacy the sheikh left them and retired to an island in the river Senegal. Here he founded a monastery with strict rules of life. The Berbers, conscience-stricken at their loss of the pious teacher, went to beg him to return. Thus he gathered round him a large band of disciples. When the number had reached about a thousand, the sheikh saw that the opportunity had come for advance. He called his followers together and said, "Go to your fellow-tribesmen, teach them the law of God, and threaten them with chastisement; if they repent, amend their ways and accept the truth, leave them in peace; if they refuse and persist in their errors and evil lives, invoke the aid of God against them, and let us make war upon them until God decide between us." Bands of young men went through the Berber tribes preaching and exhorting the people to repent, but without success. Those associated with the monastery were now formed into a sect and given the name of Al Murabitin, a word meaning "those dedicated to the service of God." This sect is famous in history under the European title of Al-Moravides.

The next step is very important as showing the typically Moslem method of spreading the faith. The sect was armed and formed into an expeditionary force, which set out to attack the tribes and to force them at the edge of the

sword to accept Islam. There was no question of a defensive war. The Moslems believed that, having summoned people to repent, it was their God-given task to compel the Berbers, through war, to obedience. They were the aggressors, and this holy war was similar to many others and had for its objective the conversion to Islam of all those who were conquered. The Moslem zealots were victorious and the tribes of the Sahara submitted to the new faith. Negro communities were forced to accept Islam, and to the energy and initiative of the Al-Moravides sect must be attributed the early spread of Islam in the pagan areas of the Sahara. Their fanaticism in the eleventh and twelfth centuries thus led to the Islamizing of all north-west Africa, and their zeal carried them across the Straits of Gibraltar into Spain, until Moslem rule held sway from the Tagus on the one side to the Ebro on the other. Their name is still preserved in the name Marabout, used in North Africa for a religious devotee.

Some of the pastoral tribes under Al-Moravides' rule living in the north trekked south and were thus brought into more direct contact with pagans. They settled among them and intermarried, and soon gained by their superior intellectual powers complete ascendancy over the pagans. Three kingdoms, at least, gained great influence through this movement—the Ghana, the Melle, and the Songhai. By the eleventh century in Songhai it had become the rule that only a Moslem could be made king. The heads of these kingdoms made pilgrimages to Mecca, built mosques and began a definite campaign for the spread of Islam through Africa. The importance of this first Moslem expansion into the heart of Africa is readily seen when we remember that the Songhai tribe penetrated to the Niger and established its kingdom in the land of the rivers. These peoples have contributed more to the spread of Islam in Africa than any others.

The Mandingo are a Negro race between the middle Senegal and the Upper Volta. They have always been

famous as an agricultural and industrial people, and have been among the most zealous missionaries of Islam, which has been spread by them among all the neighbouring tribes. This remarkable race held almost a monopoly of the commerce of the western Sudan; their merchants travelled through Nigeria, the oases of the Sahara, and along the Atlantic coast, and where they sold their wares they spread their faith.

The Hausas, the second of the three tribes, occupy the central Sudan, and are almost wholly Islamized. They are an alert commercial people with a common language spoken to-day probably by not less than twenty million people.

Perhaps in the Fulani tribe we see Islam at its best in Africa. These people are naturally reserved and haughty. This is due to the fact that they are Semitic in origin, and have affinities with both Jews and Arabs. It has been their glory that they have carried out the tenets of the Koran to the full. They have been a law-abiding people to whom religion was a governing principle of life. They have adopted the primitive simplicity of the Prophet in their habits and resemble the Wahhabis in their frugal and simple manner of life. Through the pilgrimage a number of their leaders were influenced by the Wahhabi revival of the eighteenth century. Their outlook is Arab rather than African, and their religion is Arab Islam, not the admixture so common in many Islamized pagan areas. This tribe is uncompromisingly Moslem. Their origin is obscure, but they are known to have been in Senegambia in the thirteenth century. From there they spread over the whole Sudan as far as Wadai.

These peoples have thus presented Islam at different times to pagan Africa both as a great political power and a higher culture. Small groups of Moslems were scattered over the whole of north-west Africa, and wherever they settled they profoundly influenced the people. Islam, down to the seventeenth century, was the only civilizing

force known in many parts of Africa; the influence of Europe was infinitesimal compared with the Islamic impact. It would, however, be a mistake to imagine that because Moslem influence was so strong the whole of the Sudan was Islamized. Even on the edge of the Sahara many tribes never became Moslem and have remained pagan to this day, although they have been literally surrounded by Moslems. Even the three great tribes most powerful in the spread of Islam—the Fulani, the Mandingo, and the Hausas—are by no means all Moslems, and certain important sections are still pagan.¹ Again, in estimating the influence of Islam in the western Sudan, a distinction must be drawn between practising Moslems with some knowledge of their faith and pagan Moslems, who are wholly illiterate and who have acquired a thin veneer of Islam only.

In these movements for the expansion of Islam, Moslem culture centred itself in Timbuctoo, and this city was for centuries a home of Islamic science. It is situated on an important trade route between the interior and the west and south. The imposing mosque dates from the tenth century.

By the middle of the eleventh century the Sultans of Bornu and Kano in northern Nigeria became Mohammedans. Islam thus spread far into the interior, and here two streams of influence met. The merchants of the northern Sudan penetrated across the desert to Nigeria, and the propaganda started by the Berbers spread Islam westward. In this way there was a Moslem link between Bornu and Wadai on the west and Kordofan and Darfur on the east.

Proselytizing campaigns have continued at intervals ever since Islam entered Africa, but the quiet and unobtrusive propaganda of traders and merchants has probably done more towards the expansion of Islam than the sword

¹ See Maurice Delafosse in *The International Review of Missions*, July 1926, p. 534.

ever could. The witnessing work of the merchant class was ably followed up by the religious orders, and every mosque became a catechetical centre. The most notable of these orders in more recent times is the Sennousi. It was founded by Sidi Mohammed ibn Ali with the object of reforming and spreading the faith. By the genius of this one man a state was set up on theocratic lines. Every member of the order is bound by strict rules of discipline, and the principles of the Sennousi are very similar to those of the Wahhabis in Arabia. Members of this sect are to be found in every part of North Africa from Egypt to Morocco. The headquarters of the movement are in the Libyan desert between Tripoli and Egypt. Here missionaries are trained and sent out to preach the faith. Monasteries have been established in many parts. While the members of this order aim at the defence of Islam and the instruction of those who have become indifferent and lax, yet they pay attention also to the spread of Islam, and they are busily at work among pagan tribes of the Sudan and the Sahara.

The picture we often imagine of African Islam is that of a large body of Africans, animists and pagan through and through, yet called Moslems because they are content to pronounce in bad Arabic a certain formula about God and Mohammed. This certainly may be true of some, but it is not true of all. Centres of learning such as Timbuctoo have created a body of really learned men :

Many are capable not only of reading and understanding the most abstruse productions of Arabic literature, but also of themselves composing in clear and correct language closely reasoned treatises of apologetics and exegesis. Their learning, the fame of which reaches sometimes even to Maghreb and Egypt, is greatly valued by the Mussulman doctors of North Africa.¹

In South Africa the entrance of Islam dates from the

¹ Delafosse in *The International Review of Missions*, July 1926, p. 535.

seventeenth century when the Dutch East India Company decided to use the Cape as a penal settlement, and the early batches of prisoners sent from Batavia were Mohammedans. Ultimately the prisoners were given their liberty, and were allowed to marry with the coloured population, thus forming a Mohammedan community in South Africa. This small Moslem body was reinforced by the arrival at the Cape in 1694 of Sheikh Yousif, a Javanese, with forty-nine fellow-Moslems. He was a man of royal birth and a great soldier. He had fought the Dutch for the independence of his country, and when he surrendered he was exiled to the Cape. His tomb is to-day one of the sacred spots venerated by all Mohammedans in South Africa. The colony increased. The members were carefully instructed in the faith, and they have, by their good organization and zeal, made converts from the coloured people. Many of these Moslems have learned Arabic, and have made pilgrimages to Mecca. Dervish orders have been established. A considerable literature exists, and South Africa is regarded by some as a spear-point for the expansion of Islam northwards. The race problem in South Africa has undoubtedly created the impression among the natives that Christianity is the white man's religion and excludes the coloured people. Islam is quick to grasp the significance of this, and to-day loudly proclaims its policy to be that of the supremacy of the coloured people through Islamic brotherhood.

There is evidence to show that Islam in Africa has not only gained adherents from among pagans, but also from the Christian population. The Archbishops' Missionary Commission Report (1925) says: "It cannot be denied that in the course of years many hundreds, and more particularly of young women, have lapsed from the Christian faith to Mohammedanism." If we turn to the map of Africa we see Islam entrenched along the whole of the northern coast. In Egypt over ninety per cent of the population is Moslem. From Tripoli to Morocco every

living trace of Christianity has been blotted out, and the population is solidly Mohammedan. Throughout the French Sudan Islam has made great strides, and all the way down the west coast Islam is active, progressive, and expanding. Islam holds absolute sway up the Nile for over fifteen hundred miles to about 10° north latitude. Along the east coast there are Moslem centres everywhere, and in Abyssinia within the past century it is estimated that about two hundred thousand Christians have Islamized. Islam therefore forms a ring right round Africa, with considerable penetration into the interior at certain points. The total Moslem population in Africa is estimated at about forty-seven million. The Christians in Africa number about five million only. These figures will show something of the strength of Islam in Africa, and help the reader to understand that the Moslem policy of one Islamic brotherhood, co-extensive with the continent itself, is by no means an idle dream.

Potent as was the advance of Islam in Africa in the eleventh to seventeenth centuries, it was in the nineteenth century that one of the most striking movements took place. We have mentioned above the Fula people who had settled in many parts of the Sudan. At the beginning of the nineteenth century their political strength had declined, but their position was dramatically altered by Othman dan Fodio, a man deeply religious and filled with reforming zeal for the purity and supremacy of Islam. He organized a movement which was both national and religious. He sought a reformation in Islam first of all and denounced prayers for the dead and honours paid to the saints. He attacked vices such as drunkenness and immorality, and preached far and wide the necessity of purifying Islam from its corruptness. He organized a revolution which rapidly spread. He overran Nigeria and the Hausa country, establishing his headquarters at Sokoto, and united one state after another in his kingdom. Othman died in 1817, and his son Rello carried on the work

and for a time extended his territory. Then came the inevitable decline through court luxury and idleness.

Why has Islam spread so widely in Africa? The experience in one area does not supply an adequate answer for the whole. For example, in Egypt we have seen that the early military conquests, the free use of the sword, the long-continued persecutions of the Christians and the disabilities under which they lived—the difficulty of obtaining positions or of gaining any advancement unless they became Moslems—were some of the reasons. The problem, however, is widely different from this when we see Islam spreading in pagan Africa. While it is true that the sword was freely used and that pagan tribes were compelled to accept the Moslem faith, yet this alone does not account for the spread of Islam in Africa.

Islam endows its people with a dignity peculiarly its own. It gives a man a feeling of superiority as the favoured of Allah. It implants a pride of religion in the heart of the believer, and it inspires all with a passionate loyalty to the faith and a deep devotion to the Prophet. When Moslems meet pagans they carry with them the prestige of a great religion, a conquering faith and a simple yet effective organization. The pagan immediately adopts an attitude of respect towards the Moslem. A religion that enables the worshipper to speak direct to God without any intermediary, without ritual or ceremony, without priest or temple, makes a pagan feel that he is in touch with a faith superior to his own with its fears of evil spirits and the necessity of appeasing angry gods through the medium of witch doctors and others. A pagan is quick to grasp the fact that by becoming a Moslem he can at once slip into a position of favour with the Deity. He can himself at any time invoke His aid, and he is always sure of obtaining His mercy. Direct access to God makes one of the strong appeals of Islam, and in the pagan world it wins a ready response because it is often what the pagan feels he most needs.

The prestige of the Moslem trader or settler is at once transferred to the convert who, by a quick imitation, creates an impression of superiority over his fellow-tribesmen. The desire to rise in the world is innate in human nature, and many African chiefs have become Moslem to enhance their power and prestige in the eyes of their people. This has sometimes been carried so far that a chief, while professing Islam, has been anxious to keep his people pagan so as to secure his own individual superiority over his subjects.¹

Islam has often been tolerant towards pagan beliefs and practices. The fear of rivalry has been absent and its demands on the pagans have been few. In the first instance, all that is asked of a convert is the repetition of the creed, which is sufficiently simple for the most illiterate and ignorant to understand. Much that is pagan has then been brought over into Islam, and many of the old customs and beliefs are retained by the African after he has become a Moslem. This has made rapid expansion easy but it has also proved to be a source of weakness to Islam, for many of these converts, given no further teaching, have lapsed again into paganism; others have never gone beyond a change of name. Some, however, have gone forward and have become towers of strength to Islam.

The pagan is very conscious of his ignorance. Contact with other races has shown him his backward state. He has a keen desire for knowledge and, in Islam, he sees a means of achieving his end. Ultimately this may prove to be the undoing of Islam, for the standard of education in most Moslem centres in Africa is very poor. The schools teach mainly the Koran and a garbled form of Arabic. The pupil is not long in learning that this system will not carry him very far, and as he compares the schools with other educational institutions, he sees that he is being led into an impasse where real progress is impossible. He therefore tends to turn to government and Christian

¹ See *The Golden Stool*, E. W. Smith, pp. 225 *et seq.*

missionary institutions which give him a wider range of thought and a broader outlook.

The favour with which colonial governments have viewed Islam has undoubtedly had an effect on the pagans. Rightly or wrongly pagans have felt that the governments under which they lived were on the side of Islam, and this influence has increased the prestige of Mohammedans in their eyes.

The Moslem missionary is not as a rule the paid agent of a foreign race. Racially he does not differ very widely from the pagan. He is often a native of Africa who understands the language, the thought, habits and outlook of the people. He starts with a common ground, and his contacts are at once personal and friendly, such as are only possible between men of similar races and types.¹

The Moslem, with all his sense of superiority, has no race complex. He feels no antipathy to a black skin, and there is no gulf between him and the pagan, such as often exists between a white man and a black. Again, the ethical differences are not very marked. The Moslem allows polygamy and unlimited concubinage, and although the pagan convert has to be satisfied with only four wives, yet this is scarcely a moral restraint when wives can be exchanged frequently and freely.

The pagan is one of a tribe and his thinking is tribal rather than individual. His own individuality is somewhat lost in the tribe. As a Moslem, he immediately awakens to a sense of his personal value and importance, and begins to think for himself on new lines which are not necessarily those of the tribe. He emphasizes not so much the tribe as his own place in the tribe. This is important because it has developed an individual responsibility, which, in turn, has made possible a greater co-ordination in rule and law than obtains among the pagans. The Moslem is more enterprising. He glories in a social equality with all other Moslems, and, having begun to

¹ See *The Golden Stool*, E. W. Smith, p. 227.

rise, he looks down on his pagan brethren as people quite inferior.

In considering the causes of the spread of Islam emphasis should be placed upon the religious psychology of the African. To the simple pagan the appeal of the acted and spoken prayers of the Moslems is very effective. He sees the Moslem spread his prayer mat, go through his genuflexions, audibly pray to an unseen Deity. The quiet and orderly demeanour of the worshipper as he finds self-expression through direct access to God, makes the pagan long for a personal religion of this sort. The call to prayer from the minaret and the immediate response in the village is a great advertisement for Islam. In fact, the publicity of individual prayer and the lack of mystery and secrecy in Islamic doctrine and worship are one of the most important factors in Islamic propaganda.

A survey of African Islam shows that it appeals to town people far more than to the agricultural classes. The pagan who tills the land finds his deepest instincts and religious beliefs bound up with the soil. His animism seems to him an essential part of his life and necessary to the success of his crops. Paganism is largely a worship of the land, it is bound up with the soil in which the pagan's interests lie, and he finds no counterpart in Islam for the spirit of rain or the spirit of the soil. This has been met by a free and wholesale adaptation of animistic beliefs in Islam; yet many pagans, even when surrounded by Moslems, have refused to change their faith because they cannot find in Islam what their own particular African culture demands.

The stronghold of Islam in Africa is along the Mediterranean sea coast. The Moslems constitute ninety-one per cent of the population in all the country 20° north latitude. About thirty per cent of Africa's entire population is Moslem. How far Islam is spreading it is difficult to estimate. Government reports from the French Sudan give striking figures to show that many areas are already

almost entirely Moslem, and in others we read of thousands on the road to Islam. In the British Sudan south of Khartoum, while Islam seems to be making some headway it is by no means rapidly winning the pagans, who, in the days of the Mahdi and since, have stoutly resisted all Mohammedan appeals. The great mass of the people in all the land south of 10° latitude remain pagan.

In East Africa, while Islam is strongly entrenched in some parts—particularly around Zanzibar—yet as one penetrates into the interior Islamic influence wanes until the religion appears to make little or no headway at all in Central Africa. Reports from Kenya, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, and Uganda all tell the same story. Islam does not count seriously as a force in the native life of these countries. The common reason given for this apparent stagnation is that where Islam is faced with a strong and growing native Christian Church it ceases to expand. The superior education given in Christian schools, the higher moral standards required by the Christian faith, and the clean break which Christianity demands from all converts with animistic beliefs, give the African higher ideals than Islam and a faith which does all that Mohammedanism claims to do, and a great deal more.

Travelling south, we find that Islam in the rural areas scarcely exists, and it is not until we come to South Africa that again we meet Islam in any strength. Here Moslems are organized and aggressive, and through their exploitation of the race question they make an appeal to certain sections of the native community.

To sum up : Islam is very strong in the north and west, with a considerable following on parts of the east coast and in South Africa ; yet the Moslems are not making very great strides in the conquest of the great masses of people in the interior. Here the Christian Church has met Islam, and has more than held its own.

Islam has introduced an element of progress in the social and intellectual spheres. The pagan on becoming a Moslem

is introduced into a new social world. He is given a new standing in the eyes of people to whom he has for long looked up. He becomes a member of a fraternity wider than Africa, and with horizons that baffle even his vivid imagination. His individuality is developed, a consciousness of a destiny to high things is born in him, and his desire to advance grows. On the intellectual side he begins to learn to read. He memorizes the prayers and, if he has brains, he soon is fascinated by the study of Islam, the Koran and the Traditions.

In morals there is no doubt that the Moslem African is frequently superior to the pagan. Drink is forbidden, and in some Islamized areas drunkenness has been almost stamped out. The morality of a Moslem community, it is claimed, is higher than that of a pagan. Evidence on this appears to be divided. On the one hand we are told that the restriction of polygamy to four wives has had a marked influence for good. Others say that in morals there is little to choose between the Moslem and the pagan. The fact is that the experience in one district is no guide to Africa as a whole, and the influences of Islam are patchy. In places where an Islamic culture and learning have been developed there appears to be a marked moral improvement. In areas where Islam is only a veneer little change in morals is noticeable.

Islam, as we have seen, has given to the African a sense of the worth of the individual as against the mass consciousness of pagan tribal life. This has proved to be a real enfranchisement of the individual. The convert, from being an unrecognized unit in a tribe, becomes master alike of himself and of his destiny. Islam has put an end to human sacrifices where it has gained predominant interest, and the power of sorcerers and witch doctors has declined. It is claimed that the idea of landed property under personal ownership came from Islam. This has materially contributed to the prosperity of the land and the wealth of the individual. Islam has brought into Africa a written

language, and, in some cases, such as in Swahili, it has given a new literature to the people. There is to-day a Swahili, a Hausa, and a Fulani literature due to Islamic teaching and knowledge.

Islam has undoubtedly a certain amount of good to its credit in the suppression of evil customs and vices among savage peoples, but the ultimate test is not simply present good but the permanent powers of progress and development which a religion confers on a people. We have seen how, in the seventh century, Islam raised the people of Arabia up to a point, and that there then followed stagnation with no further powers of development. A survey of the Moslem world shows that in most Moslem countries inertia, stagnation and decay have always followed upon their being left to themselves. Islam in its Arab inception had considerable pagan elements in it, taken over by the Prophet from pre-Islamic days in Arabia, and just as the Semitic and Christian parts of Islam made their appeal to Jews and Christians in other lands, so in Africa did this animism form a common ground between the Moslem Arab and the pagan African. Animism may be described as the belief that the inanimate world of nature is endowed with reason and intelligence much as animal beings are. It stands for a worship of spirits, and here the Moslem with his doctrine of *genii* and spirits appealed to the pagan whose religion was bound up with animism. The difference seems to be that while in Islam the belief in spirits was coupled with the doctrine of the unity of God, in pagan Africa the place of God in worship was taken entirely by demons and spirits. All that was required, therefore, in the conversion of the pagan to Islam was that he should add to his animistic beliefs the creed—there is no God but God. The supremacy and power of the one God was the great contribution of Islam to a pagan world.

The pagan world, however, was by no means willing to accept Islam simply in its Arab form, and Africa, where it has become Moslem, has given a contribution to Islam

which has often made it animistic in type and colour. This constitutes a compromise with polytheism and charms, and enchantments are still commonly used to exorcise evil spirits. Thus the idea of a Supreme God has not overthrown heathen beliefs, but has been correlated to existing religious practices. Tree-worship, by hanging amulets on a tree, is a common Islamic practice. Thus the heathen in their conversion to Islam have brought over many of their old customs and religious beliefs, and this admixture, while making the propagation of Islam easy, does also carry with it the elements that ultimately make for stagnation and decay. Islam is not lifting the pagan out of the Slough of Despond but rather giving him a new belief tacked on to all that keeps Africa in despair and darkness. Islam in Africa is a religion in which fear of devils forms a great part of the faith. These devils are propitiated by sacrifices and their influence is warded off by charms. Such a religion is in a low stage of development, for the fear of demons hangs like a mill-stone round the necks of those who believe in them. The liberation of the African mind can only come through a faith that will break through this fear and lift the pagan out of the thralldom of spirit-worship into an atmosphere where fear of evil spirits is replaced by the love of a Father-God.¹

If Islam triumphed in Africa would it lift up the people in such a way as to enable them to grow, develop their own culture and take their place among the nations of the world? There are, as we have seen, reasons for thinking that what happened elsewhere would follow in Africa. The ready acceptance of Islam in some areas has made the Koran a fetish which has replaced the old village idol. Some Moslem communities begin and end the great fast of Ramadan with purely pagan rites. In the days before European influence was strong, Islam had it all its own way in Africa. Over great areas Christianity was

¹ See three important articles on Islam in Africa in *The International Review of Missions*, July 1926, pp. 633-68.

unknown. To-day Africa is opened up, rapidly developing, and the people are leaping into a new life filled with all that western contacts and civilization can give them. Easy transport, western education, missionary influences and European control are opening the eyes of the Africans to see that after all Islam is not the only world force, nor even the predominant religious power in the world. In French West Africa, where Islam once found its most fruitful openings, the tide appears to be turning definitely against Islam. M. J. Brévié says :

Everywhere the country youth seem to be leaving Islam. Even when their fathers practised regularly their religious duties they are now sweeping them away without scruple ; they drink, hunt and eat wild pig. Their fervour only awakes later in life in order to obtain the prayers of the marabouts after their death.¹

It must be remembered that Islam in most parts of Africa has been hitherto isolated from the rest of the Moslem world, and, apart from the pilgrimage, has had little contact with other Islamic countries. This isolation has meant a development of the faith on distinctive lines which are neither those of Cairo nor of India. It has its own traditions and its law schools. Fez has become almost as sacred a city as Mecca ; and, with the Fulani tribe, pilgrimages to the tomb of Othman dan Fodio are more frequent than to Mecca. Africa has its own saints and heroes of Islam, and great names in other lands are but shadows compared with the Sennousi or Fodio. Moslems of pagan Africa have never come into touch with the fierce fanaticism of other lands. The people are naturally kind, and they show an easy tolerance towards other faiths. At the same time Wahhabi puritanism has found its counterpart in the Sennousi of the Libyan deserts, and the ascetic mystic is to be seen in Timbuctoo. Dervish orders have thrived in Africa, and the whole Mahdi movement in the Sudan was

¹ *Islamisme contre Naturisme au Soudan français*, pp. 172-3, quoted in *The International Review of Missions*, July 1926, p. 552.

of Dervish origin, though mysticism was not a feature of it. The African has a real longing for God, and the vision of the unity of God as an omnipotent Lord came as a great revelation to the pagan groping for light. He escaped from the encumbrance of his ancestral religion and started upon the path of a new civilization. In the first flush of his new faith he feels equal to meeting anything that life may hold. As the conception of God grows on him he sees that there is little that he can do. Fatalism begins again to grip him and he resigns himself to the unalterable will of Allah.

On the desert of Egypt, a few miles south of the Delta and facing towards the east, sits the inscrutable Sphinx guarding the entrance to Africa. For thousands of years this crouching figure has been keeping vigil, and travelers who would explore the hidden mysteries of the dark continent have passed it as the last landmark before entering the interior. The Sphinx is carved out of a solid block of stone. The figure is that of an African Negro who watches silently the efforts of races and peoples to subdue and conquer the vast interior of the continent. It is typical of Africa—a symbol of the mystery of her lands. As one views the Sphinx there is something awe-inspiring in its appearance, a challenge and a warning to those who pass by. The very loneliness of the figure seems to speak of a deep need, of the pains of a land isolated and cut off from the rest of the world. Sand-storms have swept around it, partly engulfed it, and yet, unmoved, it still watches through the silent hours of desert stillness for the dawn of a new day. The comeliness of this creature speaks eloquently of all the wealth of undeveloped character in the African races. The strength that has withstood the ravages of ages is typical of a people whose affection is not lightly to be won, and the patience in mien and look is characteristic of the African who through centuries of suffering has endured untold hardships and yet emerges to-day the same lovable, patient creature—waiting, waiting, waiting.

The Sphinx, unchangeable, inexorable, patient, strong and silent is the embodiment of Africa. Egyptian kings marched their armies south in search of gold, Arab slave-raiders harried the villages of inland Africa to supply the slave-markets of Arabia. Ottoman conquerors sought to penetrate its mysteries, and still the Sphinx looked on, in silent yet eloquent protest against the exploitation of its people. The Sphinx has watched like a stern providence with earnest eyes and sad countenance the coming of other races and the selfishness of men greedy for gain who think nothing of the sorrows of Africa. Down the ages the Sphinx has challenged every would-be explorer and exploiter to stop and think before going farther. As one stands and watches the Sphinx one almost expects to hear it speak, yet no sound is heard, although with all the eloquence of a great symbol its voice seems to ring across the desert in warning. Surely the message of the Sphinx is this: "Africa is a great prize only to be won by those who will serve her disinterestedly for herself and not for gain; Africa will respond to love alone." Kings, emperors and rulers have marched forward bravely to snatch this prize and the desert has rung to the shout of troops on the march; yet the Sphinx has watched and seen empires rise and fall, kingdoms spread out and grow, only to pass away. For thousands of years men have contended for Africa and the soul of Africa has remained as inscrutable as the Sphinx, the heart of Africa as unmoved as that great block of stone, and all the time Africa has waited for the coming of those who, by love and service, will win the affection of a suffering people and to whom the heart of Africa can respond.

To-day Islam is contending for the soul of Africa. Can Islam meet Africa's needs? History shows the blighting effects upon a race of a fatalism that decrees a man's life from start to finish. Couple with this the animism of Islam and its pagan element and at once a situation appears in which African races would develop, with all

the fear of spirits, a faith in an inexorable God who fixes man's fate from before his birth. Into this situation come all the new factors of westernization through trade and commerce with the commercializing influences of Europe. Is there here anything that is going to create new moral and spiritual forces by which the African can be helped? A semi-pagan Islam plus the materialism of the West is not going to redeem Africa, and yet Africa awakened and educated, mistress of her own destinies—as she some day will be—must either rise in spiritual vision to a wholly new moral level, or her future will be chaos. Is there anywhere, apart from the Christian conception of God and life, anything that will win and hold the heart of Africa?

CHAPTER X

THE REVIVAL OF ARAB ISLAM

IN an earlier chapter we have seen how Mohammed projected his faith into a non-Arab world, and how, through contacts with other civilizations, Islam changed in outlook and to some extent in content. We now turn back to Arabia to see how matters fared in the home of Islam itself.

To the Arabs no Abbasides were true caliphs at all, and over many parts of Arabia any semblance of control disappeared; during the very period when Baghdad was at its zenith and a liberal Islam was shedding the light of ancient culture over the world, Arabia was relapsing once more into the political chaos of tribal feuds from which it had been rescued by Mohammed. Strife broke out continually over the pilgrimage, and successive rulers of Mecca regarded the pilgrims as their peculiar and legitimate plunder. Both Baghdad and Cairo tried to impose a suzerainty over Mecca in order to protect the pilgrims, but the sufferings of those who attempted the perilous journey were a scandal to the whole Moslem world. It was not until the Turks came into power that the Hedjaz felt the pressure of outside influence. The pilgrim road was once more opened, but the Arabs among themselves lived in a state of permanent war.

It would be wearisome to pursue through the centuries the story of Arabia, which is remarkably alike in different ages. The Arabs, almost wholly illiterate, cut off from the outside world and at enmity with one another, lost any prestige they ever had. It was the same Arabia as that of "the days of ignorance" with the addition of a fanatical

creed. Unity had disappeared and Islamic solidarity had become a forgotten dream.

Throughout this period Moslems of Arabia looked askance at the rest of Islam. The changes in custom and practice were noted with horror, the lapsing of Moslems from the rigid code of Mohammed was looked upon as a sign of decay, and the Arabs regarded themselves as custodians of the pure faith. They sought to eliminate from Islam all outside doctrines and to keep only the simplest tenets. They could not understand the new interpretations of Moslems living under conditions widely different from those of Arabia. Every innovation was to them an offence against God. Down the centuries the stern and rigid faith of Arabia remained unaltered, and by the eighteenth century the cleavage between Arab Islam and the rest of the Moslem world was sufficiently pronounced to impress the Arabs with the need for reform in Islam. Aristotle, Plato, and Greek learning meant nothing to the Arabs. The mysticism of Ghazali and the Persians made little appeal to men reared in the stern life of the desert. The learned centres of Baghdad, Cordova and Cairo were of no account to men who found in the Koran all they required. Liberal thought had no place in Arabia, and the only environment for Islam which an Arab understood was that of its original home. It was natural therefore that the Arabs should feel that, with the passing of centuries, many Moslems had drifted into error, that they had added to the faith once delivered by Mohammed and departed from the rigid simplicity of the Koran. Islam in its original conception had remained, and the Arabs were true patterns of the Prophet himself.

Mohammed had been stirred by the idolatry of Mecca, and had carried his reformation right through to the complete purging of Arabia from idolatry. In much the same way an Arab prototype of the Prophet in the eighteenth century, viewing with deep concern what he thought were evident signs of the growth of idolatry in

Islam, determined to rid Arabia at least of these pernicious influences and to introduce a movement for the purification of the faith. This was the most momentous event in Arabia since the days of Mohammed and introduced into Arab life a new force that has grown in importance and strength until it has become to-day the dominating influence throughout the peninsula.

It was about the year 1740 that Mohammed Ibn Abd-el-Wahhab began his campaign for the reformation of Islam on Arab lines. He was a member of the Hanbali sect of Moslems, the strictest of the four great schools of Islamic thought. He had travelled extensively outside Arabia and had studied Moslem law in Baghdad. Wherever he had gone he had seen signs of change, laxities and superstitions among Moslems. His soul was stirred by his visit to the Shiah shrine at Kerbela, and to him Moslems appeared to be steeped in idolatry. What he really witnessed was Islam freed from its desert environment, but to him there could be no Islam that was not Arab. He saw the influence of other cults and beliefs on Islam—the sacred shrines, the richly ornamented tombs, the luxury of the people, prayers to saints ; and the superstitions of the age called forth his scorn and criticism. He was deeply versed in Mohammedan law, and a little insight into the variations of Islam in different countries showed him the marked difference between Islam, as Mohammed had conceived it, and the faith as expressed in the practice of the people outside Arabia. Even in Arabia he saw signs of the influence of these lax views of the law of the Prophet. At Mecca and Medina he witnessed customs and ceremonies in connection with the pilgrimage many of which, he felt, were contrary to the real spirit of Islam ; but it was the lives of Moslems themselves that really alarmed him. They had lost the simplicity of the Prophet and were living in a worldly atmosphere of ease and comfort instead of, as he believed to be right, practising the self-denying austerity of the seventh century.

He returned to Arabia with a burning sense of shame for his co-religionists. God was dishonoured. Islam was in danger, and the faith must be purged and purified if the glory of Islam were to return once more to the land.

His teaching won a ready response among the Bedouin. Much in the same way as Mohammed had fired them with religious and martial zeal did Abd-el-Wahhab stir the imaginations of these desert folk. His was a gospel of simplicity. He preached Paradise to the faithful and the terrors of hell to the unbeliever. The Bedouin had drifted into a mechanical religion with a large admixture of paganism, but they were fired, as their forefathers had been before them, by the message of a living faith that called for warlike action. His preaching soon aroused the fears and jealousy of the heads of the faith, and Abd-el-Wahhab, like Mohammed, had to flee for his life. He took refuge in Daraiya under the protection of Mohammed Ibn Saoud, the Emir of Nejd, who became a convert to the new teaching. At this stage, when once more an Arab chief was drawing the sword in order to carry out reforms and defend the honour of Allah, we may pause and look at some of the special points of Wahhabi teaching.

We have to imagine the growth of authority in Islam through centuries of Islamic rule and learning, during which time new customs, ceremonies and teaching came to be accepted as Islamic. A Moslem who disagreed with these generally accepted principles tilted against recognized orthodox authority which laid down the correct interpretations of the Koran. Abd-el-Wahhab in his denunciations of what he called idolatry in Islam soon found himself in conflict with the whole weight of Moslem opinion. His dilemma was similar to that of Protestants who were in opposition to much in Roman practice, and were faced with the authority of the Roman Church. Abd-el-Wahhab adopted a thoroughly Protestant principle. He demanded the right of private judgment. He rejected the idea that only the learned scholars of Islam could

interpret the Koran. On the contrary, he claimed that any true believer with sufficient education to read and understand the Koran could judge for himself in matters of doctrine.

This principle he applied to the doctrine of mediatorship, or the intercession of the saints. It is generally held by Moslems that Mohammed is a living intercessor for them at the throne of God. Abd-el-Wahhab taught that at the last day only would Mohammed, by permission of God, be allowed to intercede for his followers and that until then no intercession was possible. He claimed that the Koran, rightly interpreted, taught this. Chap. 20, v. 108, reads: "No intercession shall avail on that day, save his whom the Merciful shall allow and whose words He shall approve." There has grown up for centuries in Islam a whole cult on this doctrine of intercession. Prophets and saints are invoked for aid on every conceivable occasion. The issue was clear-cut and definite. Abd-el-Wahhab took his stand on the Koran, and declared that no intercessors are necessary in this life for the believer's approach to God. God is directly accessible to all, and without any mediation whatever. It will readily be seen that this reformer had seized upon two very vital principles, namely, the right of private judgment, and the direct access of the soul to God.

There followed naturally in Wahhabi teaching the deduction that, if these two principles were right, no believer was tied by the authoritative interpretations of the Koran, and all the rites that the doctrine of the intercession of saints had introduced were anti-Moslem and forbidden. Consequently, the decoration and the illumination of saints' tombs, the reverence paid to the tombs, and particularly the obeisance at the Prophet's tomb in Medina, were forbidden. Many Moslem festivals were proscribed, and the number reduced to four. Women were forbidden to visit the graves because wailing and weeping were considered to be wrong. The use of the rosary, charms,

and amulets was banned, and everything was done to reduce Islam to the primitive simplicity of the Prophet's day. The whole movement was the answer of Arab Islam to the Moslem world in its development under the cultural and racial influences of other lands. Arabia was sundered by tribal jealousies and feuds much as in Mohammed's day, and Abd-el-Wahhab, with his new ally, Mohammed Ibn Saoud, the Emir, drew the sword, as the Prophet had done, to compel Arabia to accept a purified faith and to unite under one rule. Unity was to be won at the edge of the sword. Compulsion was to be used until Arabia had been purged of error.

The Bedouin of the Nejd joined the movement, and responded to a call to arms to defend the honour of Allah. It looked as though the world was to witness yet another swarming period of the Arab race. In 1761 Abd-el-Aziz, the son of the Emir, led an army through Mesopotamia to Kerbela, the sacred city of the Shiah in Persia, and cleansed the city of all traces of idolatry. The tomb of Hussein was stripped, and the rich treasures with which it was ornamented went to fill the coffers of the Wahhabi army. By the close of the eighteenth century the Wahhabis had made their power felt from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The army, after its incursion into Persia, turned its attention to Mecca and Medina, and in 1808 Mecca was captured. In the same year Abd-el-Aziz, after brilliantly leading his followers to victory, was assassinated by a Persian in revenge for the pillage of Kerbela. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Saoud, who displayed even greater military prowess than his father. The capture of Mecca at last wakened the Moslem world to the fact that a new power had arisen. Saoud carried out in the sacred city the most thorough reforms. Smoking was forbidden by the Wahhabis, and a great bonfire was made of all the tobacco and pipes that could be collected in the city. So stringent were the rules that a woman caught smoking in the seclusion of the harem was dragged forth, mounted on

a donkey, and paraded through the streets with a pipe suspended from her neck as a warning to others. All rosaries and charms were forbidden, and were destroyed whenever they were found. The worldliness of the Meccans was attacked, and the use of silks and satins was banned. The administration of the city was taken over by the Wahhabis, and where laws appeared to conflict with the rules of Mohammed they were immediately cancelled and new laws substituted.

Mecca having been captured and purified, Saoud wrote to the Sultan of Turkey as follows :—

Saoud to Salim—I entered Mecca on the fourth day of Muharrem, in the 1218th year of the Hijrah. I kept peace towards the inhabitants and destroyed all things that were idolatrously worshipped. I abolished all taxes except those required by the law. I desire that you will give orders to the rulers of Damascus and Cairo not to come up to the sacred city with the Mahmal, and with trumpets and drums. Religion is not profited by these things. May the peace and blessing of God be with you.

What the Sultan of Turkey felt about the reformer may well be imagined. Turkish taxes were gone, the Ottoman authority was flouted, and the Mahmal forbidden entry into Mecca. Before the end of the year Saoud had captured Medina also, and even the tomb of the Prophet did not escape his puritanical zeal. The richly ornamented dome of the tomb was destroyed, and other damage done.

For nine years the Wahhabis ruled in Mecca, and at length the Sultan of Turkey, afraid for his own throne, was roused to action, and Mohammed Ali, the Khedive of Egypt, was ordered to march against Saoud and to suppress the Wahhabi movement. It was while the Turkish Army was being mobilized that Saoud died (1814). He was succeeded by his son Abdullah, who at the commencement of his reign had to meet a strong Turkish force. He was defeated and eventually taken prisoner and sent to Constantinople, where he was publicly executed as a rebel

in 1818. Turki, Abdullah's son, abandoned the struggle and fled to Riyadh, where he was assassinated.

The Wahhabis in their brief and meteoric career had come very near to complete success. They had subdued all North Arabia, captured and despoiled the sacred cities of Islam, penetrated into Persia, and spread their doctrine of holy war far and wide. Their success and defeat alike were due to their reactionary policy, which scorned all liberal thought, and to their reforming zeal, which thoroughly frightened the rest of the Moslem world. Their clear-cut gospel of simplicity was the strength of the movement within Arabia, but it was its undoing in the world outside. Ibn Saoud had to face political difficulties outside his land that were beyond his powers. Religious fervour could not solve them, and Turkey had a better military equipment and greater resources than the Arabs. They alienated many who honestly wanted reforms by their insistence upon trivial matters. The suppression of smoking, brass bands, silks, satins, rosaries, prayers and offerings to saints, and many other things, only irritated, where a little diplomacy might have won support. The destruction of the Prophet's tomb was the final blow, and the Moslem world was enraged at this act of barbarism. Turkey, appealed to by Mohammedans everywhere, had delivered Mecca and Medina from Wahhabi control, and with typical Ottoman thoroughness in such matters, had crushed the Wahhabis beyond hope of recovery.

Although the Wahhabi movement was at an end in Arabia, it had exercised in its brief period of conquest an influence through the world of Islam and far beyond the frontiers of Arabia. The pilgrimage, while the Wahhabis were in occupation of the sacred city, was a great opportunity for propaganda. Moslems from distant lands were fired with a new zeal for the faith and they returned to their homes with a great resolve to see Islam supreme and to use the sword for the conversion of people to the faith. While the Wahhabis were carrying on their campaign in Arabia

there came to Mecca a Sudanese, Sheikh Othman dan Fodio of the Fula tribe. He was soon converted to the Wahhabi doctrines, and, as has been already related, he returned to West Africa to unite the scattered members of his tribe under the banner of an Islamic holy war. He turned his people from a peaceable and pastoral tribe into a fanatical army, which immediately commenced a war for the conquest of the western Sudan. The spread of Islam in Nigeria owes much to this period. The campaign, in fact, only came to an end with the British occupation of Nigeria in 1900.

At the same time there appeared in Mecca pilgrims from Sumatra who caught the vision of world dominion by Islam through a jihad. They returned to the Dutch East Indies to form an army of wild fanatical Moslems who declared war upon their pagan neighbours in Sumatra, and in the name of God and Mohammed carried fire and sword through the country. Moslems in England and France may preach toleration and declare that "there is no compulsion in Islam," but here is an instance, one of many, when the sword was freely used to compel a pagan people to accept Mohammedanism and where the murder followed swiftly of all who would not submit to Islam. Women were violated, villages burned and children sold as slaves. These atrocities were only put down finally by the intervention of the Dutch Government.¹

Sayed Ahmed of Oudh, India, also a pilgrim at Mecca during the Wahhabi occupation, returned to India as a whole-hearted disciple of Abd-el-Wahhab and commenced a holy war against the Sikhs, which was only ended by British intervention.²

There are other instances of Wahhabi influence in Africa. The Sennousi owe much of their zeal to Abd-el-Wahhab, but enough has been said to show how the doctrine of holy wars

¹ For a full account of this holy war the reader is referred to *Der Islam in Batakland*, and *Islam and Christendom*, by Dr Gottfried Simon, p. 16.

² See Sir William Hunter's *The Indian Muslims*, p. 61.

can fire the imagination of primitive people and lead to untold miseries. In these days when facts of this kind are being denied by the teachers of a new Islam, it should be remembered that the only toleration which the non-Moslem races of India, Sumatra, Nigeria and elsewhere ever received was through the influence and power of western Christian nations. These lands owe nothing of their freedom to Islam. It was in spite of Moslem wars and of Islamic teaching that freedom was secured by European powers.

It is at rare moments in history only that Arabia has produced men of world fame. Mohammed was such a one, and in the Saouds of Nejd there were all the makings of others. After their overthrow the Wahhabis lived for years a quiet and uneventful existence, unnoticed by the outside world, despised by the people of the Hedjaz, and few, if any, imagined that underneath the calm of a desert life there burned a consuming fire. But the old spirit of Islam was not dead. The faith that had stirred the imagination of desert Bedouin was still there. The hatred of "an idolatrous Islam" roused all the old fanaticisms as fiercely as ever, but shorn of all military power the Wahhabis appeared as a harmless though bigoted tribe. Sullenly they retired to the fastnesses of their desert home to wait, with all the infinite patience so characteristic of the Arabs, for a better day. The faith that had driven an Arab army half-way round the world in the seventh century and at the end of the eighteenth century had subdued almost all Arabia could not be quenched so easily.

Mr Wilfrid Blunt, in the *Future of Islam*, wrote in the year 1882 :

The present condition of the Wahhabis as a sect is one of decline. In India, I believe, and in other parts of southern Asia, their missionaries still make converts and their preachers are held in high esteem. But, at their home in Arabia, their zeal has waxed cold. The Ibn Saoud dynasty no longer holds the first position in Nejd, and Ibn

Rachid, who has taken their place, though nominally a Wahhabi, has little of the Wahhabi fanaticism.

Mr Blunt goes on to say, "Islam is no longer asleep, and were another and wiser Abd-el-Wahhab to appear, not as a heretic, but in the body of the orthodox sect, he might play the part of a Loyola or a Borromeo with success."

Before the nineteenth century closed, however, a further factor was brought into the situation. Abdul Hamid, the Sultan of Turkey, began to strengthen his hold upon Arabia. He determined to have a highway of his own to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and a scheme was launched for the building of a railway from Damascus, through the Hauran plain and Transjordan, to Medina. Moslems all over the Islamic world were appealed to for donations towards this iron pilgrim way. By 1908 it had reached as far as the gates of Medina, but opposition from the Arabs prevented its extension to Mecca. This angered the Sultan, who promptly deposed the ruling Emir of Mecca, and Hussein, his nephew, who had spent long years in Constantinople, was appointed Sherif. The Turkish garrisons were strengthened, and the Sultan sought to expand his influence down to the Persian Gulf. But while the Arabs were prepared to acknowledge the Sultan as caliph in their prayers in the mosques they stoutly resisted anything that would curtail their independence. Behind Turkey was a Teutonic imperial policy which aimed at undermining British influence in South Arabia.

As the twentieth century opened on Arabia, Turkey was tightening her grip on the peninsula, the Arabs were straining every nerve to maintain their independence, and the Wahhabis were slowly regaining strength and preparing for a further struggle for supremacy. The Turkish military machine was pitted against the fierce individualism of the desert. The jealousy of tribes and inter-tribal feuds made it comparatively easy for the astute

Ottoman to play one tribe off against another, but neither Mecçan Arabs nor officials of the Sublime Porte reckoned upon the advent of an overpowering personality who would gain the affections of the people and rise to sufficient strength to unite Arabia under his rule.

While Turkey discussed the strategic centres of the country the Arabs, in the heart of Arabia, laughed at strategy as they watched the rise of a new personality more potent than armies, more powerful than organization, and more far-reaching than all military strategy. Ibn Saoud, or to give him his full title, Abdul Aziz bin Feisul bin Saoud—the lawful heir to the emirate of Nejd, appeared in Riyadh. He soon gained control of the Wahhabi people and rapidly extended his authority over inland Arabia. Within twenty years he drove the Turks out of Katif on the Persian Gulf and deposed his chief rival, Ibn Rachid, who had been an officer under the Wahhabi government. This man's family had for the past fifty years been the greatest Arab chiefs in Arabia, and now Ibn Saoud, with lightning rapidity, had driven him out of Hail and made himself master of his dominions.

What the Arabs had been waiting for was a leader, a personality that would win their loyalty and hold their allegiance, and Ibn Saoud was that man. Not since the days of Mohammed had Arabia seen such a commander. No one since the seventh century had fired the hearts of desert Arabs in the same way. He is renowned for his hospitality, and the poorest never go away unfed. He espouses the cause of the oppressed, and his even-handed justice has given security to the weak and the helpless. His word is law, and there is no appeal against a judgment pronounced by him. He is a tall, commanding figure, more than six feet high, and equally well proportioned. There is nothing of the pomp of power in this son of the desert. The ostentation of sultans is entirely absent from his court. Ibn Saoud dresses in a simple white robe over which is thrown a brown cloak; his feet are shod

with sandals, and he is almost indistinguishable from his subjects. His face is swarthy, and his beard is trimmed in true Wahhabi style. His dwelling is a camel-hair tent and he receives his guests sitting on a sheep-skin. His rugged countenance displays all the characteristics of the Arab race. His soft brown eyes, a magnetic smile, and a gracious manner quickly capture the admiration of all who meet him. One who visited him in his desert home writes :

I have now met all the kings of Arabia, and I find no one among them bigger than this man. I came to him with an unburdened heart, bearing him neither hatred nor love, accepting neither the English view of him nor that of the Hedjaz. I came to him, in fact, with a hard heart and a critical mind, and I can say that he captured my heart at the first meeting.¹

Ibn Saoud, with all his charm, is swept at times with storms of passion, and then his features assume a savage expression. He is terrible in his wrath, and woe to those who incur it. But his anger is quickly over, and this Arab with a warm heart and a big soul, rugged and unaffected, is a veritable knight. He is guide, philosopher, friend, ruler, judge and advocate to more than half Arabia. He is the greatest Arab since Mohammed's day. His exploits would fill volumes, and are related in tent and town from Aden to Amman.

A man who can lead three hundred Arabs against a walled city and drive out two regiments of Turkish soldiers, a man who can unite warring tribes of Arabia as they have hardly been united since the days of Mohammed himself, and who can administer his country so well that property has trebled in value, is a real leader. He is more than that—he is one of the world's born kings.²

Through the pre-war days of the twentieth century Ibn Saoud grew in power. What was the secret of his success ?

¹ *Asia*, August 1926, p. 734.

² Paul Harrison, *The Arabs at Home*, p. 131.

First of all, religion. This, with the Wahhabis, is not a matter for a few learned sheikhs. It is the concern of every member of the community. Faith in Allah is a great reality, and the voice of the desert finds a living echo in the Bedouin heart. God is Great, Supreme, Omnipotent, and the Wahhabi bends his head to the sands of the desert in surrender and obedience to Him. The gospel of simplicity, preached over a hundred years ago, has come to life again, and inland Arabia to-day is in the throes of a great religious revival on puritan lines. This awakening means something personal in religion to every man who sees the vision of old Abd-el-Wahhab. It began by an effort to instruct the Bedouin in the faith. Those thus instructed were witnesses, and were told to pass on the message and instruct others. They were then banded together in a society called the *Akhwan* or brotherhood. The rules are strict, and the five daily prayers are compulsory to all Wahhabis. Anyone who absents himself without good cause is haled before a judge and summarily condemned to a public beating. Tobacco-smoking is strictly forbidden, and men have been known to lose their lives for indulgence in this habit!

The mentality of a people who regard the smoking of a pipe as great a sin as adultery and even murder is difficult for a westerner to understand, but to the Wahhabi if a thing is forbidden it is dishonouring to God to allow it. A Wahhabi watching one day a richly dressed sheikh enter a house remarked, "God will doubtless forgive murder, and lies, and theft, but He will never forgive clothes like that."¹ This brotherhood is not just a new Dervish order—it is not, in fact, connected with any Dervish order at all, nor has it any organization. Its members are distinguished by their white turbans, and they are bound together by a common purpose. Their task is to pass on the message, and religious instruction is given daily. No wonder such fiery zeal is winning converts all over Arabia. By the fire of

¹ Paul Harrison, *The Arabs at Home*, p. 222.

a new-born faith and the sword of God these people are rapidly becoming masters of all Arabia.

Education forms no small part of Ibn Saoud's programme. It is estimated that two-thirds of the people in inland Arabia can read the Koran, and many of them can write also. While Wahhabi tenets are adhered to with fierce fanaticism yet no ban is placed on literature from outside Arabia. Newspapers and books from Egypt find their way into the heart of Arabia, and there are many contacts with the outside world. Theology is a concern of the state. What a man should believe is prescribed by law, and swift punishment overtakes those who show signs of thinking for themselves. Human life is cheap in the desert, and of small account compared with the integrity of the truth. In battle the Wahhabis seem to court death. Their ambition is a martyr's death on the battlefield while fighting in a holy war for God and Mohammed. Fear is unknown to them, and once embarked upon an expedition there is no hardship which they will not endure.

When war began in 1914 the Wahhabis were predominant in inland Arabia, but Mecca and Medina were closed to them. The Sherif of Mecca had a permanent feud against Ibn Saoud. Perhaps memories of the early part of the eighteenth century gave the Hedjaz folk a feeling of fear lest Ibn Saoud should do what his great-grandfather had done and capture Mecca once more. Hussein, the Sherif, was in a difficulty. To the south were his enemies the Wahhabis, the Turks were in occupation of his territory, and he had to decide whether to risk a possible attack from Ibn Saoud and revolt against Turkey, or side with Turkey and come completely under Ottoman authority. Hussein decided to throw in his lot with the allies. Ibn Saoud was bought off by a British subsidy, and a truce was kept between the two rival Arab chiefs throughout the war. When the war was over Ibn Saoud and Hussein both strove for the leadership of Arabia. Hussein, as a reward for his

part in the war against Turkey, became an independent monarch and assumed the title of king. When Turkey deposed the caliph King Hussein saw the opportunity of fulfilling a long-cherished ambition and declared himself Caliph of Islam. This threw him once more into direct opposition to Ibn Saoud, who saw that if this claim was established and accepted the Wahhabis would ultimately come under the control of Hussein; and war followed. Beyond typical tribal raids little was done during 1922 and the following year; both sides were preparing for the struggle. In 1924 it was evident that war to a finish was contemplated, and Ibn Saoud, who denounced King Hussein as a usurper of the caliphate, took the offensive. The Hedjaz army was defeated, and Mecca was once more captured by the Wahhabi troops. Jiddah was invaded, and King Hussein abdicated in favour of his eldest son Ali and fled to Cyprus.

The great pilgrimage was celebrated in 1925 under the auspices of the Wahhabis, who acted with moderation and care. The report of an attack on the holy places called forth bitter comments from Persia. An official statement from the Persian legation in September 1925 says :

Available information shows that the Wahhabis when occupying Mecca destroyed the Holy Place and the tomb of Khadijah [wife of the Prophet], and in their recent attack on Medina they also bombarded the tomb of the Prophet himself and the Mosque of Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet.¹

This news caused a great sensation in Moslem lands, and Persia celebrated September 5th as a day of national mourning. Moslems in India were equally disturbed, and big public meetings of protest were held in Bombay, and a one-day strike in the public markets took place as a protest against Wahhabi desecration. Later on Ibn Saoud issued an official denial of these charges, but from eye-

¹ Quoted in *Daily Telegraph*, 7th September 1925.

witnesses it is clear that while the story of the damage to the dome of the Prophet's mosque and the tomb of Hamza is untrue, yet at Mecca the damage was considerable. The tombs of Khadijah and Amina, wives of the Prophet, have been completely destroyed. A number of other tombs were razed to the ground. This demolition of the domed tombs, as Ibn Saoud pointed out, was in accordance with the Wahhabi creed that tombs used for veneration and worship should be destroyed. A survey of the situation shows that the present Wahhabi ruler, while strongly puritan, is very anxious not to rouse the Moslem world against him. He has offered to rebuild the tombs if Moslems wish, and his policy is on the whole conciliatory.¹

In December 1925, Jiddah, the last important place in the Hedjaz, fell into the hands of the Wahhabis after a siege that had lasted many weeks. King Ali abdicated, renounced all claim to the caliphate and sailed from Jiddah for Baghdad, where he joined his brother, King Feisul of Mesopotamia. Ibn Saoud's domination of the Hedjaz was now complete, and once more the Wahhabis have made themselves paramount in Arabia.

The Moslem world was sore at the Wahhabi bombardment of sacred places, but Mohammedans of India and elsewhere have a strange way of forgetting their grievances when a Moslem leader rises to power and is successful. Opinion rapidly veered round in favour of Ibn Saoud, who at once took advantage of this by inviting various Mohammedan powers to send representatives to Mecca to discuss the future control of the holy places. His one condition was that neither King Hussein nor his sons should have anything to do with the country in future. He advocated that the Hedjaz should have complete autonomy with a governor chosen by the people, under a commission representative of various Moslem powers. Ibn Saoud now stood before the Moslem world as the ruler of a large and

¹ It is important to remember that this book left the author's hands in January 1928, and that the Moslem world at the moment is a changing scene.

entirely Islamic country, independent of European control and apparently free from western influences.

After the occupation of Mecca by the Wahhabis the Moslem world began to readjust its thinking and to take note of this new phenomenon. Turkey had been a terrible disappointment to Moslems, and although they admired Mustapha Kemal's military achievements, they strongly disagreed with his anti-Moslem policy in regard to the caliphate. Here, however, in Arabia, was a man who ruled independently of Europe, who was not influenced by the West and who was unspoiled by western teaching, a Mohammedan and a great military genius. Here at last was a centre of unity in Islam, where Islamic affairs could be discussed without any western political influence being brought to bear upon the deliberations.

For some time after the deposing of the caliph Moslems had talked of a Moslem world conference to decide the caliphate question, and Cairo was advocated as the centre in which it should be held. A committee was set up at the Azhar University and it was arranged to hold a world congress of Moslems in May 1926 in Cairo. Invitations were sent out to Abdul Krim of Morocco, the King of Persia, Ibn Saoud of Arabia, the Amir of Afghanistan and to the Moslem communities in India. When the congress met it was by no means representative of the Moslem world. Arabia would have none of it and other countries too stood aside on the ground that Egypt, being under the domination of Britain, was an unsuitable country for such a gathering. In spite of obstacles, however, the congress sought to discuss fully the caliphate problem. Four issues were before the delegates :

The definition of the caliphate.

The qualifications necessary for a true caliph.

The manner in which the caliphate should operate in future.

The question as to whether it is possible to find anyone

who could fulfil the legal conditions of a caliph at the present time.

The caliphate was defined by the congress as "the office of spiritual and temporal chief of the Moslems." Emphasis was laid upon the fact that a true caliph must hold both spiritual and temporal powers. It was ruled, no doubt out of respect for the position of the late caliph-sultans of Turkey, that a Moslem could reach the supreme office by conquest.

Ibn Saoud's reply to the efforts of the Azhar University of Cairo was to call a world Moslem congress of his own at Mecca, for which he chose the pilgrim season of 1926. Invitations were sent out far and wide, and as the time drew near it was seen that many parts of the Islamic world would be represented. Ibn Saoud advocated the holding of a conference annually, this gathering to be the first. His policy was year by year to discuss Moslem affairs and to review the situation in order to safeguard the future of Islam. It was an attempt to create a new spirit of brotherhood and unity among the divided and warring sects of Islam.

All delegates to the conference were also pilgrims, and before they left Jiddah they had to shave and uncover their heads and to dress in the orthodox pilgrim costume, which consists of only two white sheets, one for the upper part of the body and the other for the lower. It was surely a sign of the times that educated men from India and elsewhere performed this pilgrimage, dressed in nothing but two white strips of cloth, in motor lorries. Before the conference began the delegates performed the ceremony of encircling the Kaaba seven times and other rites of the pilgrimage. Having gone through this ordeal satisfactorily, they were allowed to don their ordinary clothes. The second day was spent entirely in prayer, and in performing the many duties ordained for those who visit the Holy City.

In an interview which Sirdar Ikbāl Ali Shah had with Ibn Saoud, he taxed him with the responsibility for the massacre at Taif, the robbing of Moslems of the Hedjaz who were not Wahhabis, and suggested that if this sort of thing were done in the heart of Islam—Arabia—"Islam might fall a victim to the caprice and whim of any conquering clan or tribe which might happen to seize Mecca." The king, in reply, gave a long account of the evils of King Hussein and his family, and declared that they were not true Moslems at all, but because they were under foreign influence they were anti-Moslem. He spoke of the immorality, drunkenness and slavery which existed under the regime of King Hussein, and added that when his troops entered Mecca and Taif they could not believe that they were in a Moslem land at all. "A Moslem is a Moslem if he acts according to the book and not because he possesses a Moslem name," he added.

In outlining his policy the king said :

It is my desire to show to the whole universe that Musulmans, be they negroes or Englishmen, stand on the same footing, can eat together, can hold the same appointments, can have the same freedom and affection and thought ; but I must insist that they conform to the true dictates of Islam if they are to have all these privileges.¹

The congress proper opened on June 6, 1926, in the old Turkish Artillery barracks. Many Moslem countries were represented. The delegation was as follows : Russia 7, Hedjaz 12, Java 5, India 12, Nejd 5, Asir 8, Palestine 8, Syria 8. The Sudan and Egypt were represented by direct nominations of the king himself.

It is significant that Turkey, Persia, Iraq, and the Yemen refused to send delegates. The Persians were alienated by the damage to the sacred tombs at Mecca. The Turks relented and a representative was sent to Mecca from Angora. Iraq is ruled by King Feisul, the

¹ Quoted in *The Times*, 23rd July 1926.

son of the deposed King of the Hedjaz, and the Yemen people are known to be in opposition to the Wahhabi movement.

The congress was opened by the king in person. He spoke of the need for reform and uplift in Islam, of the demands of the country for betterment. He invited the co-operation of the delegates in the moral and social improvement of the Hedjaz, and declared that "the government is being run on the lines of the Koran."

After this there appear to have been acute differences of opinion as to who should be chairman, and Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah, who was present, remarks :

Had not some one judiciously hinted that this was a serious gathering of responsible men assembled to solve certain vexed problems and not a vegetable market, matters might have descended to abuse and blows.

When the question of voting came up an Indian delegate, speaking (strange to say) in English, demanded more votes than the Arabs on the ground that there were more Moslems in India. This was ruled out, and the congress began its work. For the importance of such a gathering as the "All World Moslem Congress," the subjects discussed were almost trivial. Few seemed to touch the Moslem world as a whole, and most of the time was taken up in discussing Arab affairs. The purchase of the property round the Holy Place at Mecca with a view to making a broad avenue of trees was raised, and, in view of vested interests, was referred to a sub-committee. The proposal to build a railway between Jiddah and Mecca and the linking of it with the Medina-Damascus line occupied three whole days, and it was agreed to appeal for money in all Islamic lands. The profits from the railway were to be divided so as to give one-half to the Sultan Ibn Saoud, and the other half to the upkeep of the railway. This is surely a unique way of floating a railway company! Apparently the Arabs are not pre-

pared to spend any money themselves on the railway. It was decided to establish hospitals and base camps for pilgrims. Perhaps the most amazing decision was that each delegate at congresses in future years must subscribe three hundred pounds towards the running expenses of the congress.

This extraordinary gathering may make us smile, as its proceedings appear to have been anything but satisfactory, and the cleavages in Islam were apparent from the first. But the problem we have to consider is—What moral force lies behind the ideal which called this congress together? Will a spirit of unity grow out of this movement that will spread to the rank and file of Moslems and thus create a new, strong and powerful Islam?

One searches the published reports of this congress to find what was said about the caliph, but in vain. If the subject came up at all it appears to have been shelved as the king would not allow subjects to be discussed which would arouse controversy in Moslem countries. There are many claimants for the office, and yet no one who aspires to the post has any general support. The idea at the back of all these discussions seems to be the establishment of a league of Moslem nations, the president of which would be a democratic caliph. The caliphate, it is argued, should be a representative institution, and not a personal office. The plan is for it to function through a permanent assembly of responsible delegates representing the whole Moslem world.

That this idea is in germ in the minds of those who met at Mecca seems clear. They have agreed to meet regularly, but the Moslem world has to reckon with the king, Ibn Saoud. He, like his prototype, is an Arab of the Arabs, and his movement is a reaction against present-day tendencies in the Moslem world. It is based, as the king said, on the Koran. These are the very elements in the past that have spelt stagnation. It was only when the firm hand of Mecca was removed and Islam adapted itself to non-Arab ways that progress came. Arabia has always

stood for orthodoxy, and Arabia is one of the most backward countries in the world to-day. Can Moslems of India, Egypt, and Turkey, who are educated and enlightened, submit to Wahhabi dictation and rule? If not, how can unity come from the Arabs, the most disunited people on earth? The fierce individualism of Arabia does not lend itself to world co-operation. The fanaticism of Wahhabi warriors creates scorn in such places as Cairo. The difficulties in the way of real unity are colossal, and yet the whole trend among Moslems is to get together and to discuss their differences. The importance of the congress was not so much in the public gatherings of the delegates as in the group discussions that were held at intervals between the plenary sessions.

We have seen how, when the Wahhabis formerly occupied Mecca, a fierce wave of fanaticism spread to India, Nigeria, and other lands. This time efforts seem to have been made to curb fanatical outbursts and to minimize the harsher elements of Wahhabism. Ibn Saoud, as we have seen, has made himself master of most of Arabia. He will probably go on to absorb the whole country, and there his limits seem to be fixed. If he moves in any direction outside Arabia he will at once come into conflict with Great Britain. On the east lies Mesopotamia with King Feisul, a bitter enemy of everything Wahhabi, on the south is Aden, a British Protectorate, and on the north Transjordan under a British mandate. Egypt has no love for the present ruler of Mecca. If Ibn Saoud enforces his Wahhabi tenets then all hope of unity with other Moslem lands will vanish. If the pilgrims are to conform to Wahhabi ways then again trouble is ahead. We have already seen the struggle between liberal and conservative forces, and while liberalism in general is on the ascendant it is a strange thing that leaders of liberal thought should seek for a centre of unity in a reactionary country like Arabia and among a people who are fiercely fanatical against the very things which they do daily.

Arabia is one aspect of a complicated situation, but Arabia is no longer isolated. It is linked up, in its future development, with the rest of the world, and it is for the moment the rallying ground of the scattered and divided forces of Islam.

Military conquests in the past have been sterile, and Medina, Baghdad, Damascus are pathetic survivals of lost opportunities through a lack of any progressive spirit in Mohammedanism. Progress has always hitherto been checked by the dead hand of traditional authority. The Arabs are a splendid race of freedom-loving, independent men, with great possibilities, but can the ideals of Islam ever be realized through Wahhabism centred in Arabia? Other influences are making themselves felt. Western commerce is coming in like a flood. Education is developing, and much of the old fanaticism of the eighteenth century has already disappeared. Ibn Saoud and his brotherhood may yet introduce religious revival throughout Islam, but at present the tendency is for the whole movement to be confined to Arabia, and to be localized within the peninsula. The divisive forces of Islam have so far proved stronger than the efforts of those who seek for a new solidarity. The league of Moslem nations is a great dream. It grips the imagination by its very title, but it is doubtful whether it will ever be more than a dream.

CHAPTER XI

ISLAM—A MISSIONARY RELIGION

No better field presents itself for a study of Islam as a missionary faith than India. Most of the methods of propaganda have been adopted from the time when Mohammed ibn Kasim invaded Sind in A.D. 712 down to the present day when, through the Ahmadiyyas and others, a widespread effort is being made to establish Islam as the one religion for the whole world.

Half a century had scarcely passed since the death of Mohammed when the victorious armies of the Prophet reached the borders of India. They came in from the north and occupied the valley of the Indus about Multan. Forty years later the Rajputs succeeded in recapturing Sind and they maintained their control over the country for the next hundred and fifty years. In spite of military reverses Islam made progress and converts were recorded outside the region of Moslem authority. In 1019 Mahmud of Ghazni overran a large part of Hindustan, but these raids were made more with the object of securing booty and plunder than of making converts, and "the proselytizing sword seems to have served no other purpose than that of sending infidels to hell."¹ Altogether Mahmud invaded North India seventeen times and extended his empire from Persia to the Ganges. Multitudes, either to save their lives or to escape the tyranny of the Hindus, went over to Islam. The Moslems intermarried and became domiciled in India. In the following century Mohammed Ghori opened a campaign for the conquest of all India. He conquered Bengal and established himself as an independent sultan. Many

¹ Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*, p. 210.

thousands of the outcastes and untouchables became Mohammedans readily, because they thus acquired freedom from the slave position to which the caste system had condemned them.

Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries thirty-four sultans reigned at Delhi, and Mohammedan conquests extended both to the south and east. Islam was consolidated under the wise rule of Akbar (1556-1605). He subdued and brought under his authority the kingdoms of Gujarat, Bengal, Kashmir, and parts of the Deccan. He reconciled the Hindus to his rule, in a measure, by a far-seeing policy of conciliation. By the seventeenth century the whole of India as far south as Tanjore had been brought within the Moghul empire. Islam was established, with varying success, from Afghanistan to Bengal and from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. The religion of the Prophet made many brilliant conquests and consolidated its position in the grand monuments of art and literature which are the pride of India to-day. In the following century rebellions broke out, the Moghul empire began to decline, and the Deccan, Oudh, Bengal and other areas gained their independence. But Islam was firmly established as one of the great faiths of India, and to-day there are about seventy million Moslems in the country.

What then were the forces and influences that turned this great body of people from their age-long beliefs to the adoption of a creed so widely different from the religious instincts of India? In the early days Moslem invaders were carrying out a jihad for the conversion of idolaters, and although it is easy to exaggerate the influence of forcible conversions, yet there can be no doubt that the sword, used in unprovoked and aggressive wars, was the primary cause of the Islamic advance in India. The country, to use the Koranic phrase, was a "House of War" to the invaders, who boldly acknowledged that they were the soldiers of God and His instruments for the conversion

of the infidels. The method adopted was the simple one of mercy and judgment. Before an area was attacked it was a common practice for the Moslem general to call upon the people to forsake their idols and embrace Islam. Naturally a Hindu population refused to accept the new faith at the bidding of an invader, and this terminated the "mercy" offered. Judgment speedily followed, and the issue was decided by a wholesale carnage of the people and the subjugation of the country to Moslem rule; and if, as Moslems believe, all idolaters go to perdition, then these early fanatics by their sermon of the sword sent more Hindus to hell by slaughter than they saved by forcible conversions. Sometimes, after the terrible lessons in other areas, Hindus would profess Islam to save themselves from disaster. This was notably the case when Hardatta, a ruler of Balandshahr, submitted to Mahmud of Ghazni in the eleventh century. Hardatta heard of the coming of Mahmud and decided that safety could only be secured by conforming to Islam. He went forth, therefore, with ten thousand men to meet Mahmud and to accept Islam and renounce his idols. This method of compulsion was used intermittently right down to the eighteenth century.¹

Everything depended upon the attitude of the ruling sultan who, if he were of a proselytizing character, would harry with the sword all who refused submission. Others, such as Akbar, adopted the opposite plan and gave a wide measure of tolerance to their non-Moslem subjects. The impulse for holy wars and forced conversion lay in the old Arab conception of the faith. Mohammed the Prophet had led the way, and those who sought literally to imitate him and fully to obey him were filled with a zeal which inevitably ended in carnage and slaughter. This is well illustrated from an event in the nineteenth century. In 1826 the Pathan tribes of North India were roused by the preaching of a Wahhabi, Sayed Ahmad, who, after a visit to Mecca, returned to India to preach a new crusade. He

¹ See *The Preaching of Islam*, by T. W. Arnold, pp. 255 *et seq.*

travelled through Bengal, crossed the north-west frontier, and immediately began a jihad against the Sikhs in the Punjab. The movement was finally put down by the British who, after the annexation of the Punjab in 1839, had to send no less than twenty expeditions against these fanatical warriors. The trouble was directly traceable to Arab-Wahhabi influence and was without doubt due to a literal interpretation of the Koran and the example of the Prophet.¹

Granted the primary factor of invasion, holy wars, and forced conversions, other forces in the spread of Islam quickly made their appearance. With a more or less settled Moslem rule court influence counted for much. A Mohammedan ruler of the fourteenth century records his missionary activity thus :

I encouraged my infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the Prophet, and I proclaimed that every one who repeated the creed and became a Musalman should be exempted from the *jizyah*, or poll tax. Information of this came to the ears of the people at large and great numbers of Hindus presented themselves and were admitted to the honour of Islam. Thus they came forward day by day from every quarter, and, adopting the faith, were exonerated from the *jizyah*, and were favoured with presents and honours.²

This method of peaceful penetration with all the weight of a despotic sultan, the lavishing of presents upon converts, and the remitting of taxes, was no doubt accountable for more conversions than holy wars or the use of force, but even granting all this—does it account for the permanence of the converted and the solidarity of the new faith? Undoubtedly not. To make converts under these circumstances was comparatively easy, but to hold them and their children permanently within Islam was a very different matter. However we may account for it,

¹ See *Mohammedan History*, a handbook prepared under the direction of the historical section of the Foreign Office, No. 57, p. 118.

² Quoted in *The Preaching of Islam*, by T. W. Arnold, p. 258.

we see in Islam a religion, a civilization and a culture widely differing from those of Hinduism, yet an essential part of the life of India to-day. The faith, first introduced by the sword, has taken root, has established itself in the hearts and lives of millions of people, and has become an indigenous religion. Many in India with their mysticism and vague pantheistic system of thought were attracted by the positive teaching of Islam. The worship of Allah gave the Indian something that he could not find in his polytheistic creed. Islam stood for reality in religion, and as the new faith became known many turned from the haziness of uncertainty to the dogmatism of the Koran, which "became a veritable tonic to the life and thought of upper India."¹

How far Islam, as a system, attracted the intellectual classes in India is difficult to estimate. Whether the positive faith of Islam led to numerous conversions one does not know, but when we carry this line of investigation a stage further and watch the impact of Islam upon the lower caste and outcaste Hindus there can be no question but that here Islam found a fruitful field and that it is one of the chief causes of the widespread acknowledgment of Mohammedanism in India. It is a significant fact that the population in North India, while preponderatingly Moslem, is by no means *all* Moslem, and in Bengal and other parts, where Islamic political power has been weaker than in the north, Islam has won notable missionary successes. The reason is that military expeditions never carried Islam, as an acceptable faith, very far in India, but the Moslem preacher who witnessed to a message of equality and brotherhood to a down-trodden and despised outcaste population won lasting allegiance where the sword failed. Arab and Persian traders carried their merchandise and trade along the coast and with it their faith too. In every land wherever Islam has penetrated peacefully the trader has been the greatest missionary

¹ See Bishop Lefroy's *Mankind and the Church*, p. 286.

force. He carries no badge of professionalism about him. He is not a paid agent of a society. He never organizes his work. But the fact that every trader was a missionary has brought millions of people into the fold of Islam. We have seen how very potent was this influence in Africa. It was none the less so in India. The merchant, after settling in a town, was never long before he built his mosque. This was the centre of all the religious activity, and, being on a voluntary basis, the system spread rapidly and mosques multiplied. Malabar was Islamized in this way, and from there traders carried over the faith to the Laccadive and Maldivé Islands and the entire population of both islands in course of time became Moslem.

We have already seen how in Persia people, dissatisfied with the cold formalism of deistic Islam, brought into it a mystical element, a religion of the heart, to meet their need. The process of enriching Islam by the adoption of mystical thought went on in India as well. Sufiism made a strong appeal to the ascetic Indian, and Islam in India, at an early date, claimed its list of saints. Hindu pilgrims were attracted to Islam as thus presented by mystics and holy men, but it was to the poor enslaved untouchables that Mohammedanism made its greatest appeal. These people, who dragged out a miserable existence of semi-starvation in this world, and without a ray of real hope for the next, were offered a free entrance into a new social organization which broke the fear of caste and lifted them out of a slough of despair into a larger freedom and fuller life. The influx of large numbers of illiterate people from outcaste areas in Islam has not necessarily given the new converts any intelligent grasp of their faith, and the presence of large numbers of Hindus, by whom they are generally surrounded, has created a kind of Hinduized Islam, where there is little outward difference between the people of the two religions. Hindu festivals are often kept by Moslems, and oblations offered at the shrines are similar to the Hindu custom. Many are lax in their

faith through ignorance, but even among the most illiterate there are certain marks of Islam that hold the people together. The most ignorant know some of the Moslem prayers, they all profess one creed which is short and simple enough for anyone to grasp, and they are bound together by a common loyalty to their Prophet.

Although education among Moslems in India has been hopelessly backward, yet great efforts are being made to-day to remedy this. The first real impulse to education came shortly after the Indian Mutiny, when Sayed Ahmad Khan founded his University at Aligarh. On its educational side it aimed at the reproduction of the British public school system. On the religious side it sought to modernize Islam and to reform it. With this educational movement has come a new orientation of Islam, and its adaptation to modern thought and progressive ideas. Aligarh, with its enlightened system, was able to review the fortunes of Islam and to criticize freely its failures. A Moslem professor at Aligarh summed up the situation as he saw it thus :

It was the bad example of the Moulvies ; second, the fatal system of modern purdah, with its restrictions on the intellectual development of woman ; thirdly, the constant and silent withdrawal of the most pious and moral Moslems into a life of private prayer and devotion ; and lastly, the doctrine of necessity that brought about our downfall. I say it was, in my opinion, these four causes that brought Moslem society to its present low level of intellect and character.¹

Coming down to the present day, Moslem leaders are faced with the problem of maintaining an essential unity over a vast area and among widely differing types of Islam. The majority of their people are illiterate, and Moslems have to tackle this great task of educating and instructing their people or they will lose their hold upon them. In addition to this, they still preserve the old

¹ Quoted in *The Mohammedan World of To-day*, p. 148.

missionary idea and seek to extend the "House of Islam" by the conversion of Hindus and others. While, therefore, the purpose to-day is the same as when Islam was first brought into India, yet the methods, under modern conditions of life and British rule, have been very largely changed to meet the new situation.

Propaganda in Islam has at present a threefold aim—(1) the strengthening of the faith of the believers; (2) the defence of Islam against attack and encroachment from other religions; and (3) the preaching of Islam to non-Moslems. To attain this object every known method of propaganda has been brought into play. The Koran is now translated into the vernacular in order to make its teaching accessible to the simple and illiterate classes. Some Moslems advocate the use of vernacular prayers, and the press is extensively used everywhere in the defence of Islam. Newspapers and magazines are published in all the great vernaculars. In 1857 there were only twenty-five papers printed in the vernacular for the whole of India and for all religions. To-day there are over three thousand newspapers and periodicals, and Islam claims of these over two hundred.¹

Moslems are now organizing missionary societies, and are adopting the methods of Christian missionaries. Lectures on Islam are given regularly, street preaching has become a recognized method of Moslem propaganda, and tract distribution is common in all the main centres. Preachers travel from one end of India to the other exhorting the faithful to give up Hindu practices, to conform to the laws of the Koran, and to reform their lives. At the same time they lose no opportunity of presenting Islam to Hindu audiences. If in the early days of Islam the caste system made conversion from Hinduism easy, it is much more the case to-day, and many instances could be given where hundreds of outcastes, disgusted

¹ See a chapter on Journalism in the Moslem World in *The Moslem World of To-day*, edited by J. R. Mott, p. 123.

with the treatment of their high-caste folk, have embraced Islam. With the growth of education, low-caste people are no longer willing to submit to the odium placed upon them by their Hindu brethren. They are not the docile slaves of former years, and here Islam is pressing with all the force that an extensive propaganda can give to capture the untouchables for Mohammed.

A number of actual Moslem missionary societies have been formed. One such has its head office in Poona with sub-offices at Lahore, Agra, and many other places. In the printed literature of this society its aims are thus set forth :

- (1) To place the teachings of Islam in their true light before Moslems in particular and non-Moslems generally ;
- (2) To care for orphans and neglected children irrespective of caste and creed by means of orphanages, boys' and girls' homes, and industrial schools ;
- (3) To uplift the untouchables ;
- (4) To carry on general relief work.

This society, in adopting these aims and ideals, was roused to activity by a study of facts about the welfare of Islam to-day and the opportunity of the moment for expansion. Hundreds of thousands of Moslems, they tell us, know practically nothing of their faith and are in grave danger of drifting into Hinduism. This society educates such people and sends out preachers "to check the present deluge of apostasy about which all the Moslem press is ablaze."¹ The chief aim, however, is more than the education of backsliding Moslems. It is to reach the millions of the depressed classes of India, and to this end an enormous literature is in preparation and tracts dealing with various aspects of Islam are being distributed free.

Social service is an important objective. Relief work

¹ For a full account of the work of this society see *The Moslem World* for April 1925, pp. 182-7.

was done by the society in Malabar, and it is claimed that at least twenty-five thousand lives were saved as a result. This relief was given to Hindus as well as Moslems. Another purpose which the society keeps in view is the counteracting of the work of Christian missionaries. To this end centres have been opened where Christians were particularly active. The society claims that success in actual converts to Islam has attended the effort. In Jammu alone, in a single month, about five thousand men, women and children became Moslems. There are now five orphanages at Poona, Ahmadnagar and Calicut with about three hundred children in them. The orphanages seek chiefly to admit children, newly converted to Islam, from the outcastes. Seventeen schools are run by the society, and lectures are given in government Urdu schools and in the Training College at Poona. In industrial work classes have been started in tailoring, carpentry and weaving. It is significant that the society does not concern itself with higher education but concentrates upon the depressed people and hopes to train, from among the orphans, a band of preachers who will witness to Islam throughout India. The cost per missionary to the society is about one hundred rupees a month. In the future programme of work plans are being made for the opening of new industrial homes, medical stations and dispensaries, and an additional hundred schools.

It is curious that the most active body of Moslems in propaganda work among people of other faiths is the Ahmadiyyat, a sect which is regarded as heretical by orthodox Islam. This sect was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who, at the age of fifty-four, declared himself to be a heaven-sent prophet. He was a man of good family and by lineage a Moghul. His father was a physician and Mirza Ahmad as a young man studied medicine. He seems to have had leanings towards Sufism and for a time he lived the life of a recluse. In

his prophetic office he was putting forth a claim that contradicted Mohammed, who asserted that he was the last and final prophet. Ahmad, through his many links with Indian life, saw the world waiting expectantly for a prophet to arise. The Hindus centred their hopes in the advent of Nehu Kalank Avatar, the Christians were looking for the reappearing of Jesus Christ, and the Moslems were waiting for the Mahdi. All these expectations, Ahmad claimed, found fulfilment in himself. He set out, therefore, to propound a new revelation by which he hoped to unite both Islam and Christianity. He defines his position thus :

The mantle of divinity is cast upon the person who is thus favoured of God and he becomes a mirror for the image of the Divine Being. This is the secret of the words spoken by the holy prophet: "He that hath seen me hath seen God." I shall be guilty of a great injustice if I hide the fact that I have been raised to this spiritual pre-eminence.¹

In regard to his great work in the world he tells us :

The task for which God has appointed me is that I should, by removing obstacles which have been set up between man and his Maker, re-establish in the hearts of men love and devotion to God, and by making manifest the truth should put an end to all religious wars and strife and thus lay the foundations of abiding peace.²

The programme put out by Mirza Ahmad includes the search for the solution of the moral and spiritual difficulties of to-day, the relief and succour of the oppressed, the restoration of the rights of those who have been

¹ Quoted in *Modern Movements among Moslems*, by Dr S. G. Wilson, p. 133.

² *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam*, by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ad-Din Mahmud Ahmad, p. 22. This book is the most authoritative work on the Ahmadiyyat published. The writer is the head of the sect and sets forth in clear terms the evidence for the founder's claims and the ideals which lie behind the movement to-day.

despoiled, the abolition of all war, the unification of mankind under one leader with one common faith and creed, the purification of Islam from error and the propagation of the faith throughout the world.

In regard to Christianity he accepted the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, but denied the crucifixion, and, in its place, taught that Christ was placed in the tomb in a state of unconsciousness and that when He rose from it He went to Afghanistan and Kashmir. Ultimately He died a natural death and was buried at Srinagar. This "swoon theory" of the resurrection has long been abandoned by scholars, but Mirza Ahmad, without the learning of the West at his disposal, revived it as an answer to the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. He placed himself in open opposition to much in Christianity, but it is only fair to say that he has been equally opposed to many things in Islam, as for example to the jihad, which he said has proved a curse to Mohammedanism.

This new sect had no sooner been launched than it met with a storm of abuse from Mohammedans, and throughout Mirza Ahmad's lifetime he was subjected to bitter hostility from the Moslems of India. In spite of this his following increased. He proved himself an able propagandist, and made extensive use of the press for the publication of tracts, magazines, and other literature. Converts have multiplied mostly from Islam, and this sect is among the most enterprising in missionary efforts in Mohammedanism. Unlike the Bahai movement, which has definitely broken with Islam, the Ahmadiyyat continues within the Moslem fold. While they profess loyalty to Mohammed and the Koran, yet a new interpretation has been given to many parts of the book. The supremacy of Mohammed is challenged in the claim that Mirza Ahmad made to be a prophet, and the new revelation he spoke of has introduced many novel elements into Islam, if this sect may be still regarded as a part of the old faith. On the spiritual side Ahmad taught that there are three stages in the union of the soul with God. The

first stage is when the soul finds acceptance before God in prayer. The second when revelation comes to the soul, and the third in the final stage, when man becomes the manifestation of divine attributes.¹

It is, however, not so much the tenets of this sect with which we are here concerned as its propaganda. Mirza Ahmad died in 1908 and a split in the sect followed his death. One section, headed by the son of the founder, continued at Qadian to uphold the faith as given them by Ahmad. The other party transferred its headquarters to Lahore. Its members sought to approximate their ideas more closely to orthodox Islam, while at the same time standing for a progressive policy. Both sections are equally zealous in the dissemination of their faith, and missionary work stands in the very forefront of their programmes. Both have sought to establish Moslem missions in many parts of the world, and both have their missionaries at work in England. The Qadian people, the real Ahmadiyyat, have a centre at Putney, and the Lahore party, who now disown any connection with Qadian, have a mosque at Woking. Two magazines are published to advocate the cause of Islam—*The Review of Religions* from Putney, and *The Islamic Review* from Woking. A quantity of literature is printed and circulated in England, and it is claimed that a number of British people have become Moslem. Thus, while Christian missionaries are carrying the Gospel to Moslem lands, Moslems are organizing missions for the conversion of England to Islam. The Koran has been published from Woking with parallel Arabic and English texts. It is printed on India paper, and is bound very much like the Bible. *The Review of Religions* tells us that “regular Moslem missions are working in all parts of the globe—England, Germany, America, Australia, East and West Africa, Trinidad, Philippines, Hong-Kong, Mauritius, and the Straits Settlements, and are gaining converts in large numbers, not from the poor classes like Christianity,

¹ *The True Islam*, p. 114.

but from educated and high-class people, in the teeth of all opposition put in their way by Christian priests.”¹

Into the religious revival of Islam in India there comes a further complication which can only be referred to in passing. The political situation, with the strong national spirit that has been aroused, has made leaders of Hinduism and Islam seek to draw together. The Hindu-Moslem Alliance was formed to enable Indians of all creeds to present a united front in their demands for national independence. Similar alliances have been formed in Palestine between Arabs and Christians, and in Egypt between Moslems and Copts, and in the excitement and fervour of an anti-western campaign Moslems, Hindus and Christians have fraternized on the basis of common national aims. On the surface it has looked as though nationality transcends religion, and that unity is possible; but in the religious temperament of the East, where faith is the deepest instinct in life, these alliances have always so far broken up as one or other party has sought to make religious capital out of the political situation.

The leaders in India may be correct when they state that without religious unity there can be no national existence, but to a missionary faith, such as Islam, it is a fixed principle that religious unity can only be obtained by the absorption of all other faiths within the “House of Islam.” Some Hindus, knowing well this aspect of Mohammedanism, seek to make the first approach towards unity by pictures of an ideal Islam as the exponent of the spiritual idealism of Asia. So eager are they to co-operate with Moslems that they completely forget their past history, when Hinduism was laid in the dust by invading armies of Islam. Islam, it is argued, has changed, and the day has come for mutual toleration and a new synthesis in religion wherein Krishna and Mohammed can join hands, and the disciples of both faiths can unite in the one purpose of national unity. This effort to build a bridge between Hinduism and Islam is, virtually,

¹ *Review of Religions*, Oct. 1925, p. 17.

an attempt to unite the Allah of Arabia with the many gods of India.

In the higher regions of thought the leaders on both sides may come to a mutual understanding where each would respect the faith of the other: but all such alliances are jeopardized constantly by the undercurrents of racial differences and religious antagonisms among the common folk. Nor is it only among the masses that difficulties to unity appear, for the very programme of Moslems for India to-day makes the capture of Hinduism for Islam an important feature in propaganda. To some extent this may be said of Hindus too. In the United Provinces there has been recently a strong movement to win back to Hinduism the Malkanas, who were originally Hindus. The Moplah rising in 1921 was an instance of a Moslem attempt to convert forcibly to Islam a large body of Hindus. It is not, however, through isolated cases of this sort that the Hindu-Moslem Alliance is wrecked, but because Islam is working night and day for the conversion of Hindus and cannot co-operate politically without seeking to make capital out of it for the faith. So potent does this spread of Islam appear that even Sir Rabindranath Tagore predicts that Mohammedans will soon gain supremacy over the Hindus, bringing India again under Mohammedan rule.

India's greatest problem to-day is due to Hindu-Moslem communal strife. This conflict, which at times has taken the form of common street brawls and bazaar riots, is by no means confined to the lower classes and illiterates. Newspaper editors have entered the arena and a lively campaign is conducted on the lines of abuse and attack, thus engendering bitterness and hatred over a wide area between the people of the two religions. Such strife has an important bearing upon the future status of India. Both Moslems and Hindus are working for a position of supremacy in any form of democracy which may be granted to the country. Sir Mohammed Shafi, a former member of the viceregal executive council, writing in the *Indian Review*, says:

When entire communities start running amok, with the result that perfectly innocent Moslems, Hindus and Sikhs are butchered openly in the streets, not because they are themselves responsible for crimes committed in wanton disregard of all human laws, but simply because they happen to profess their respective faiths, it is childish to talk of full responsible government or Dominion status for India.¹

Islam with its eye on the future is alive to its own peril in India. Moslems in spite of their great influence are a minority of the population. They are surrounded by Hindus, and they are making great efforts to strengthen their own position and to spread their faith in the hope that some day they may dominate India as in the days of old.

We now turn to look at this same Indian movement as it is developing in other parts of the world. India has become the home base for Moslem missionary propaganda in many countries. The most remarkable aspect of this is probably the attempt to present Islam to Europe and America as the best faith for western people. As Christianity is the pre-dominant faith in the West, propaganda takes the form of unceasing attacks upon the Christian creed. A Moslem's view of Christianity to-day is that it is impracticable. Christians, they assert, do not take the laws of Jesus Christ seriously nor do they live up to them. If they did try to carry them out, they are so extreme that chaos would immediately follow. The Sermon on the Mount is described as very nice in theory, but business and commercial life to-day prove that it does not work. The Gospels are attacked as being full of inconsistencies. The Divinity of Christ is a permanent stumbling-block. The crucifixion is rejected in favour of the swoon theory, and the resurrection thus becomes a myth. The abuse of intoxicating liquor in the West is put down to Christianity, and the miracle recorded in St John ii. 1-11 is made responsible

¹ Quoted in *The Times*, 8th August 1927.

for the drink evil of to-day. The complicated theology of the Christian faith, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity, is compared with the simple and direct creed of Islam. Trinitarianism is ridiculed and Unitarianism upheld as the truth. Polygamy is defended by a comparison with the records of western divorce courts and moral scandals in Christian countries. The very civilization, progress, and science of the West are attributed to Islam, and we are told that most of our modern civilization is borrowed from Islam. A Moslem writer thus sums up the Christian faith :

It is morally impracticable ; it is intellectually inconsistent ; it is socially insufficient ; it is scientifically inferior. In all these respects I find Islam sufficient and satisfactory.¹

Islam is passing through a transition stage in many lands to-day, but in spite of ferment and upheaval there is a considerable body of Moslems who, undeterred by disintegrating forces and seeking to apply modern thought to their faith, believe that Islam still has a message for the world. A study of Islamic literature on this subject shows that most articles and books written about Islam as a world religion contain a great deal of abuse of Christianity, and the line of argument generally adopted is that, since Christianity has failed, it is now the turn of Islam to meet the world's need. The Moslem's view of his own religion, when preaching it in the West, is that Mohammed was the chosen of God to disperse the darkness of the whole world, and that he appeared in Arabia, the blackest spot on the face of the earth, and there in the world's darkest place he brought the message of Islam. Islam means the complete subjugation of the human will to the will of God, and this Moslems tell us means " Divine guidance in the working out of the real object of religion." The potentialities of human nature are stressed, and Moslems claim that through Islam these are developed into practical realities on the

¹ *The Missionary Review of the World*, Oct. 1926, p. 777.

moral and spiritual plane. *The Islamic Review*¹ has a remarkable passage on God as immanent in human nature. It is remarkable because of its different conception of God from that given in the Koran and from that taught by many orthodox Moslems in the Near East and India to-day. It reads :

The Creative Agency in us is concealed in our passions in their initial form ; we have to remove these coverings that impede the progress, and thus bring the divine flame smouldering in our hearts to full lustre. If our clay was fashioned after the image of the Lord we have to vivify the dust with divine life. Something of God is in us and we must manifest it. It is to achieve this grand end that the message [of Islam] ordains that certain of the excellent names of God be recited when a Moslem invokes divine help in his prayers.

To this picture of God as pervading all life is added the idea that belief in God establishes equality between man and man " and germinates these democratic ideas which are the true health of human society in mundane affairs." Democracy, we are told, is " the child of Islam." From this is built up the beautiful edifice of the Gospel of Emancipation. It is an easy step from this to show that Mohammed safeguarded the sacred rights of womanhood and that he did more for women than any other prophet. However far-fetched this picture may appear to western people, it is the presentation of Islam which is being given to the West to-day. To understand how Moslems wish Europe to interpret present-day Islam we must give more fully the Islamic point of view on current topics of the day as affected by the Moslem ideal and teaching.

World unity is a subject widely discussed from many angles, and Islam makes the claim that from the advent of Mohammed a new note came into the life of the world. " For the first time," we are told, " men were compelled to leave their old narrow conceptions and join the brotherhood

¹ For December 1928, p. 464.

of humanity.”¹ This is illustrated by Moslem writers from the Islamic universities where members of the black, yellow, and white races come together as brothers to study at the feet of Moslem teachers. This world unity through Islam is described as the forerunner of the League of Nations and kindred organizations for the peace of the world. Moslems regard the existence of the League of Nations as a proof of the failure of Christianity and a sign that the world is feeling after what is essentially Islamic. While the history of Islam scarcely bears out the claims thus put forward, it is of interest to note the lines of approach adopted by Moslems to the western mind. “The spirit of practical democracy and socialism as imbued in Islam paves for us,” says Mr Haniffa, “the path towards the edifice of Moslem brotherhood, an everlasting monument to the glory of Islam.”

Thus the language, thought, programme and social outlook of the West have been borrowed by Moslems to clothe in a new and attractive garb the tenets of Islam. The jihad is given a new definition. It now means “to strive hard,” Moslems tell us, for physical, mental and moral perfection. The Arabian idea of a holy war that meant conquest by the sword is thrown over. The fact that to this very day Moslem preachers in the mosques of Egypt and other lands hold a large sword in their hands while delivering their discourses is not mentioned in western propaganda. Some sects of Islam, notably the Ahmadiyyat, denounce the whole idea of holy wars as wrong, and we are now asked to believe that of all faiths Islam is the most tolerant. History is the only test of such a claim, and the whole history of Islam contradicts the statement. Lord Headley gives us an interesting account of his conversion to Islam. He says :

Speaking personally, I can only say that until I cast aside all pretence of the dogmas being necessary to my salvation

¹ *Islamic Review*.

I never felt comfort or peace, but when I finally took the step, the lines—

*Dear Father, Thou art very near ;
I feel Thy presence everywhere
In darkest night, in brightest day
To show the path, direct the way.*

became reality and I was happier than I ever was before.

Such an experience is full of interest, but we ask—"Is this Islam?" The Moslem creed is surely pure dogma—"There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Prophet of God," and no Moslem can hope for heaven who does not accept and testify to the truth of this dogma. Then the beautiful verse quoted would help any earnest seeker after God, but "Dear Father" is not Islamic at all. It is a purely Christian conception of God. Islam denies the Fatherhood of God and execrates the New Testament doctrine of God as Father. This is a good illustration of the Christian colour given to-day to the western expression of Islam. Most of the ideas so attractive to western readers are simply Christian teaching clothed in Moslem language and uttered now in the name of Islam.

In the foregoing chapters we have seen Islam adapt itself to the varying conditions of the countries occupied. Thus we see Islam still in some places, for instance Arabia, as hidebound, prejudiced and narrow, while in Persia we see how the mystical element has softened the Arab complexion of the faith and given it an eastern and spiritual tone. In Turkey it appears as democratic and progressive, but where in any Moslem land do we see it accepted and professed as it is represented by those who seek the Islamization of the West? The developments within Islam are full of interest, and we have no criticism to make of a people who are seeking to adapt their faith to modern requirements; but this western type does not appear to be true to any accepted standard in any Moslem land to-day. It is pure and unadulterated propaganda in which we are given a picture,

not of Islam as it is revealed in history, nor of Islam as it is practised in the Moslem world, nor of Islam as defined in the Koran and the Traditions, but a new cult, in which much that is considered by orthodox Moslems as fundamental is omitted.

In this propaganda, Moslems tell us, as we have already noticed, that the main contest is between Christianity and Islam, and it is interesting to note the way in which a Moslem presents his faith to Christian people. First and foremost is placed the necessity of a good knowledge of the language of the country to which the missionary goes. Then follows what is described as "reading the foreign character." The missionary is warned to address the people in "ways suited to their fancy." The Englishman is selected as good prey, and he is not to be frightened by threats nor terrorized by pictures of hell, but to be approached by sound reasoning. Heated argument is to be avoided, because the Englishman hates emotionalism, and the missionary must speak with calm and dignity, using dispassionate argument. Christianity, we are told, is losing ground, and it must ultimately be replaced by Islam. "Religion is indispensable," says a Moslem, "one must follow one religion or the other. If Christianity goes what will be the religion of the West? Islam is the only reply to the question." Moslems are encouraged in this task by being told that hundreds of thousands of people in England, tired of Christianity, are unconsciously following Islam. The ground, they believe, is already prepared, and the Moslem has now only to sow the good seed in order to reap a rich harvest in the conversion of thousands of English people to Islam.

Similar propaganda methods are in vogue in other countries of Europe and particularly in America. Every up-to-date method of the West is employed to attract the West to Islam. By immigration from Moslem countries there are about sixty thousand Mohammedans in America, and the Ahmadiyyat are making their appeal to the negroes there on the ground of equality of race.

A society has been founded for the active promotion of real Islamic brotherhood among the new converts. It will be known as the Ikhwan [Brotherhood] and the members shall meet together during the week, or fortnightly, at the house of each other so as to know each other well. For the first time in their lives they will see something like Moslem brotherhood and what it stands for. Christianity has crushed this spirit out of the body politic, yet it is this spirit of brotherhood which every religious leader came to establish. It is totally absent in Christian countries, which shows that Christianity's days of usefulness are over.¹

Moslems claim that in Yonkers, New York, there are nine hundred Moslems, all white men, who hold regular Islamic services, though so far it has not been possible to obtain any verification of this statement. In St Louis the Moslem agent regrets that he has not been able to persuade a single white man to embrace Islam. Still the work goes on and an organized attempt, emanating from India, is being made to win the western world for Islam.

Turning now to other parts of the world, in China we find a similar extensive propaganda. An International Moslem Association has been formed for the Far East. It is to be, so says *The Light of Islam*, a periodical published in Shanghai, a preliminary step for its future participation in a united association of Moslems for the world. Its aim is to spread Islam in China by means of lectures, magazines, Moslem libraries and schools. The first step in this propaganda is to be the translation of the Koran into Chinese and the publication of an Islamic history in China. The founders of this association tell us that they are convinced that "none of the actually prevailing religions in the world is sufficiently fit for the promotion of human welfare and the present age," and therefore Islam is to be taught as the one faith worthy of acceptance by all. A great effort is being made to arouse the *imams* of the mosques to renewed activity, and it is proposed to invite leading

¹ *The Moslem Sunrise*, Jan. 1924, quoted in *The Moslem World*, July 1926, p. 265.

Moslems from other lands to visit China to help in the propaganda of Islam.¹

In 1925 three Moslem missionaries sailed from India for China, and the *Indian Social Reformer* makes this the basis of an appeal to young men to answer the call of duty to Islam in preference to building up their fortunes at home.

Some years ago a forward movement was started by the Moslems of Peking, and within a few years about two thousand branches had been established throughout the country. All these activities are aimed at the welding of the Moslems of China into a unity. Hospitality is a great factor in this, and as Moslems move about over wide areas of the country, inns have been opened by Moslems and mosques have been built. In some cases the mosques have guest rooms and club-houses attached to them. Scattered Mohammedans are thus made to feel a sense of kinship with their brethren in other places and the idea of brotherhood is fostered. Another important factor is the pilgrimage to the tombs of Moslem saints. Each shrine forms a centre where the faithful meet. They discuss their cause and learn the news of events in other and often far-distant parts of the Islamic world. While much of this scheme is on paper, and a great deal may never mean more than talk, yet it all goes to show the trend of thought and the missionary aims of Islam. Every year some Chinese Moslems make the pilgrimage to Mecca and return with all the prestige of *hadjis* to China to further the world-wide cause of Islam. Moslems are to be found among all classes of the population, and although ninety per cent of them are wholly illiterate, yet the mullahs who read Arabic are pressing forward with the education of the people, and Young Men's Moslem Associations have been started on the lines of the Y.M.C.A.

In the Dutch East Indies there has been recently a revival of Islam. Education has played a prominent part and bookshops have been opened in many centres with a large supply of Moslem literature. The Dervish orders

¹ See *The Moslem World*, April 1926, p. 193.

are very active and they are producing books in four or five languages. Publications from Woking (England) are on sale, and every effort is being made to spread Islam among the non-Moslem population. New societies have been formed for the revival of religion, and nationalism is being exploited on the ground that Islam is democratic and universal.

In Trinidad, where the Moslems felt their faith was in danger because of Christian missions, a special Moham-medan preacher was sent from India.

Under the new constitution in Egypt legations have been opened at all the leading capitals of the world. At the legations as well as in important diplomatic missions Egypt is appointing Moslem chaplains. The object is said to be that the chaplains may be able to lead the midday prayers on Friday. But it is generally thought that the chaplain is an Azhar University representative and is sent abroad to uphold Islam and to secure for the religious leaders in Egypt a place in the foreign policy of the country.

A Moslem deputation was sent recently to South Africa and lectures on Islam were given in many places. From the published accounts of the tour these lectures seem to have consisted largely in a denunciation of Christianity. The brotherhood of Islam was stressed at a time when the "colour" question was an acute problem.¹ South Africa was told that there were many converts to Islam in England and many others were on the brink.

While Islam has a different connotation in different countries and although the faith is weakened in some areas by modern thought, yet a study of the activities of Moslems to-day shows Islam as strongly missionary, with its organization world-wide. Behind all lies the old ideal of a universal faith representative of an empire without frontiers and theocratic in government, yet, with all this historical idealism, Islam has shown in recent years a remarkable power of adaptability and a progressive spirit

¹ See *The Islamic Review* for May 1926, p. 173.

in the furtherance of its cause. Modern methods, such as propaganda through literature and lectures, have replaced the sword; a modern presentation of the religion has been substituted for Islam, as it is still preached in the orthodox centres. And so, in spite of Turkey's anti-caliphate action, modernism, western thought, agnosticism and other influence, Islam still holds up its head proudly and challenges the world.

The challenge is becoming increasingly a challenge to Christianity. Both faiths cannot be universal, both claims cannot be true. Islam is striving to undermine the Christian faith, to ridicule its doctrines and abuse its work in the world in order to establish a world supremacy. The issue is thus narrowed down in many areas to Mohammed or Christ—the Christian conception of God as Father, or the Moslem conception of God as Great. The issue will be decided in this contest just in so far as each of the two religions gets back to the spirit and teaching of its founder. Christianity is judged by Moslems by its failures and not by its successes. It is condemned because of its followers and not because of the ideals of its Founder. The only Christian answer to all this propaganda will be a rediscovery of the message of Jesus Christ in the hearts and lives of men.

CHAPTER XII

RENAISSANCE IN THE MOSLEM WORLD

THE site on which Cairo is built was probably once sea-shore where the Nile emptied its mighty floods and deposited its rich chocolate-coloured soil. The sea lapped round the Mokattam Hills and what is now the Delta was then under the ocean. Over a period of many thousands of years the Nile spread a thick deposit annually on the shores until the sea receded and the Delta was formed. A traveller to-day who climbs to the top of the Mokattam Hills shortly before sunset sees stretched out before him, not a broad expanse of ocean, but one of the richest lands in the world. For miles Mother Nile can be seen winding her way like some silvery serpent through the desert ; the Pyramids rise up in the west, silhouetted against the sky in the soft clear light of evening. The sun sets in a blaze of colour and the sky from west to east is aflame with the beautiful afterglow.

There, in the stillness, is wafted on the breeze the voices of the *muezzin* calling to prayer from the hundreds of minarets of the city. In a long-drawn-out and penetrating voice the words are uttered and they carry far and wide : " There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God. Come to prayer. Come to prayer." The whole city lies at the feet of the traveller. In all directions the minarets raise their noble heads, permanent witnesses to the power and glory of Islam. Moslem worshippers can clearly be seen flocking into the mosques to say their prayers. Long-robed and dignified sheikhs pass along carrying the sacred Koran. In a patch of open ground some Dervishes are holding a *Zikr*, a meeting for the

remembrance of the name of God. They form a circle, swaying backwards and forwards, and like the beating of a mighty engine the sound rises from a hundred throats, all in unison, "Allah, Allah, Allah." In the distance can be seen the outline of the Azhar University with its thousands of students, all memorizing the Koran, all inspired by a wonderful loyalty to the Prophet. And out on the desert a party of camels has halted, the men have descended, spread out their prayer-mats, and with the universe as their temple and the clear sky for a canopy they are bowing in prayer. What are they saying? Listen—

Holiness to Thee, O God!
And praise to Thee!
Great is Thy name!
Great is Thy greatness!
There is no Deity but Thee!

Prayer is nearly over, and the worshipper, kneeling on the desert with his hands on his knees, says:

O God and Lord give us the blessings of this life, and also the blessings of life everlasting. Save us from the torments of hell.

Then turning his head to the right and to the left, as though addressing the invisible audience of Moslem believers the world over, he ends with "The peace and mercy of God be with you."

We linger on at the top of the hill. Prayer is over, the people are pouring out into the streets, the camels are moving once more at a swinging pace towards the city; and as we watch we waken up to another life, incongruous and strange, that mingles with the mediævalism that we have just witnessed. As the camels strike the road a big motor-car hurries by, frightening the camels and making the riders exclaim, "O wonder of God." Peace is restored for a moment, only to be disturbed again by the loud clang of a tram as it hurries along into the city. The Arab mutters,

"We seek thy protection, O God," but his equilibrium is completely upset by the drone of an aeroplane overhead. The camels bolt, and all is confusion. Motors draw in to the side of the road with an air of profound respect for these ships of the desert. People on the road come to the rescue, the camels are caught and peace is restored once more. Soon the city is reached, and as the traveller descends from the hill-top he too joins with the motley throng that has for some time been making its way to the capital. What a contrast! The calm peace that seemed to pervade all is gone. There is nothing but hurry and hustle. People dash about, racing along, hustling one another out of the way: all in search of something, eager and intent upon attaining their object. The newspaper boys dash in and out of traffic crying the latest news from London, Morocco or Peking. Groups of young men sit at the cafés discussing in loud voices their nationalist aims and views.

This land with its once narrow and circumscribed outlook has been swept into the whirlpool of modern life. The old orthodox creed is in conflict with the demands of a new age, the culture of Arabia is being smothered by the civilization of the West. People turn their faces to Mecca in prayer but for the rest of the day their thoughts are all moving westward. The educational system of the Azhar University is being rejected by the very students themselves because it does not fit them to meet the economic demands of the day. In the bookshops are to be seen the holy Koran side by side with the latest French novels, the works of Darwin, and the writings of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray. The mixture of thought, the rapidity of the changes and the modernizing of all forms of life are bewildering, and in the midst of it one feels like the camel-driver who invoked the aid of God at the sight of an aeroplane. Yet this is typical of the Moslem world to-day, a very different world from that of even a generation ago.

In the face of these changes we are reminded of the emphatic opinions expressed by so many experts that Islam,

rigid and stereotyped, is incapable of reform. Thus the late Lord Cromer, in his *Modern Egypt*, says :

In dealing with the question of introducing civilization into Egypt, it should never be forgotten that Islam cannot be reformed ; that is to say, reformed Islam is Islam no longer ; it is something else ; we cannot as yet tell what it will eventually be.¹

Sir William Muir wrote in much the same vein :

Christian nations may advance in civilization, freedom, and morality, in philosophy, science, and the arts, but Islam stands still. And thus stationary, so far as the lessons of history avail, it will remain.

History certainly gives ground for the view that Mohammedanism is incapable of adapting itself to new conditions. Arab Islam left to itself does appear to be unchanging. Its views of life are inflexible and the system makes rather for stagnation than for progress. This is apparent in a study of lands under purely Moslem control. Arabia is exactly where it was in Mohammed's day, and left to itself there is no apparent reason why it should ever change. Pure and undiluted Islam has always spelt stagnation because it denies all liberty of thought and self-expression except along the rigid and narrow lines of an infallible book.

We have seen in the foregoing chapters, however, that undiluted Islam is a very rare thing, that Islamized people have given national, racial and cultural colours to Islam that never emanated from the Arab mind. Mysticism was scarcely a part of the original system but was largely an eastern accretion introduced to supply a known lack and to meet a felt need. Liberal thought in the Middle Ages made Islam the benefactor of the world, and philosophy and science were enriched by the writings of learned Mohammedans. But the latter were usually regarded by

¹ *Modern Egypt*, by the Earl of Cromer, vol. ii. p. 229.

Moslems as heretics and were not infrequently persecuted. When opportunity arose every liberal tendency was stamped out, and orthodoxy ruled alone and supreme for centuries over a people who drifted into decay and mental torpor. Liberalism has never been of the essence of Islam. It did not spring from the desert of Arabia but was one of the many enrichments that came to Islam from contact with other lands. We see, therefore, that though Islam by itself has never shown any powers or capacity for progress in either social welfare or intellectual research, it has always been susceptible to change as it has been affected by outside influences. This is perhaps best exemplified by a picture of Islam to-day. Let us imagine a village in Egypt. A peasant lives in a mud-built house where filth and dirt abound and comfort is almost non-existent. There are two boys in the family who for a time attend the local vernacular school, where they memorize parts of the Koran and learn to read and write. Islam dominates the family life and no outside influences disturb seriously the even tenor of habit and custom. The father one day decides to send his boys to Cairo for their education. The elder boy appears to have brains and is destined for a government school where he will eventually take a certificate and find a post in a government office as a clerk. This the father regards as an investment. He spends money on the lad so that in his old age when the lad is earning a salary he may live with him or upon him. The other boy, keeping up a family tradition, is sent to the Azhar University to be trained as a religious sheikh. These two boys, both astride the same donkey, make their way one morning to the nearest railway station. On arrival in Cairo they part, the one to study his faith and the other to learn all that the West can give in a school where the atmosphere is largely English and the teaching both modern and western.

If we can picture these same boys meeting again in the old home and the clash of views and outlook that is inevitable we shall get some idea of the widening gulf

between the orthodox conservatives who are the defenders of the faith and the modern youth who seek for progress and reform. What happens in a single home is also taking place in the whole life of the nation and of many nations in the Moslem world. The clash of ideas presents a vivid contrast, in the present generation, between a seventh-century religious belief and a twentieth-century thought and culture. The weak spots in Islam appear, and desperate efforts are made to repair the breaches, and, it must be admitted, mainly with cement from a western factory.

A notable example of this was seen in the ferment caused by the publication in 1926 of Dr Taha Hussein's book on pre-Islamic poetry. Dr Taha was Professor of Arabic in the Egyptian university at Cairo, and no subject seemed more harmless than that of Arab poetry. But Dr Taha succeeded in thoroughly annoying the orthodox party by his critical method of dealing with his subject, by some of his conclusions which were contrary to the cherished belief of Moslem leaders, and perhaps most of all by his disagreement with the religious ideas of the Azhar University. Dr Taha set out to study facts by a scientific investigation and to follow truth wherever it might lead him. He attacked the methods of study adopted generally by Moslem leaders because they subordinated scientific inquiry to religious prejudice. "We could believe and be content," he said, "had God endowed us with mental laziness which makes people cling to the old and to avoid the new." He will have nothing to do with the inertia of a dull orthodoxy, and he calls the youth of his country to search and inquire, to doubt and to probe. That he owes his inspiration to European influence is made abundantly clear. "If there are in Egypt to-day some who champion the old and others who champion the new, then it is because of the fact that in Egypt some persons' minds have been coloured by this western colouring, whilst others have got none of it, or very little of it."

The reason why a book on ancient poetry disturbed the faithful was because its conclusions undermined the position given to the language of the Koran as the most beautiful and correct Arabic in the world. Dr Taha showed that similar poetry of equal beauty existed in Arabia before the time of Mohammed. Again the book angered Moslems by showing that much of the supposed pre-Moslem poetry was "merely concocted and forged after the appearance of Islam to establish the authenticity of the prophetship (of Mohammed) and the truth of the Prophet" by showing that Jewish rabbis and Christian monks were expecting the coming of a prophet who would appear in Mecca.

This volume was no sooner published than a controversy arose which nearly produced a parliamentary crisis in Egypt in 1926. All copies of the book were bought up and destroyed and the matter was brought before the Egyptian parliament. One speaker reminded the House that the penalty laid down in the Koran for certain religious offences was stoning, and a resolution was brought forward demanding the immediate dismissal of Dr Taha from the state university, and that the government should institute proceedings in the courts against him. The resolution was finally withdrawn after the prime minister had made it a matter of confidence in the government.¹

This little book and the storm it created will help to show the cleavage between the old Islamic party and the new thought that is so apparent to-day. It is, as we have seen, by no means confined to Egypt; in every Moslem land there is in varying degrees a similar struggle for religious liberty and freedom. The orthodox are straining every nerve to check heresy, and the liberal youth of Islam are determined to win the day.

Mohammedan lands have been invaded by the traveller, the tourist, the trader, the missionary and the ambassadors of western nations. This has led to the opening up of

¹ For a full account of this book see *Dr Taha Hussein and his Critics*, by S. A. Morrison.

hitherto inaccessible lands. Railways, motor roads, steamships and other means of transport have made travel easy. This has not only increased the tourist traffic; it has afforded new facilities for Moslems to travel, and while the Moslem East has been invaded by the globe-trotter, the West has witnessed a strange influx of dusky-skinned men from Moslem lands. They have met traders in their own land and have carried their trade into all the capitals of Europe. Their sons have found their way into most of the universities of the West, and wealthier Moslems have made a practice of spending the summer in Europe in exactly the same way as Europeans have wintered in Cairo or Jerusalem. The turning to Mecca in prayer was a symbolic act, designed to fix the mind on Mecca, but to-day more Moslems visit Europe annually than go to Mecca, and the educated classes are now looking to the West for inspiration, guidance and education.

During the past fifty years there has been a general awakening throughout Islam to the need of education. As Moslem countries have been brought into contact with European life they have realized the immense differences which separate their people from those of the West. The complete dependence of the Moslem world on Europe for machinery, industrial and agricultural, has opened the eyes of many to the backwardness of their own lands. The result has been that every Moslem country has sought to develop a new educational system. Even the most backward races have awakened, and where a couple of generations ago education was despised and considered unnecessary, to-day we find national systems and schools provided by law and supported from state funds. The remarkable thing is that in almost every case these new systems are modelled on the European plan.

Where Moslem countries have been under the "protection" of a European power, education has developed at a much greater rate than in purely Islamic states. Thus Islam, after making its impact on the non-Arab world, has

reached the position where it in turn is being influenced, and in many ways completely changed, by western education and life. The first impacts of this modern movement tended to make the eastern people a dull copy of westerners, but Moslems are now alive to this danger, and they seek, while adopting western scientific methods, to recast them in eastern and Islamic moulds. European methods of education have, however, wrought great changes. The spirit of democracy to-day has come in from the West. The desire for an open mind in the pursuit of knowledge, the determination to test and prove things, and the willingness to accept ideas whether Koranic or not are gains of great value. The greatest gain, of course, has been the ever-increasing number of Moslems who can read and write. A new literacy has brought with it a fresh intelligence on many social problems in Islam. Superstition, prejudices, and intolerance are being superseded by a new knowledge of science, and with the growth of education comes the demand for facing social evils and for reforms on modern lines.

Education has brought with it the study of foreign languages and increasingly is the literature of Europe open to the Moslem world. Students return to their home lands to translate the learning of the West into Arabic, thus widening still further the circle of occidental influence.

The demand for literature is a natural outcome of the new literacy. The output is enormous. The bookshops that stock purely Islamic literature are relegated usually to back streets and are small and insignificant. Those where the literature of all countries is supplied are large and flourishing establishments, and the European booksellers say that their best customers are young Moslems! Journalism is of comparatively recent date, yet it is making rapid strides. The first newspaper appeared in Turkey in 1882, but even in the reign of the Sultan Abdul Hamid newspapers from abroad were always censored before being delivered to their owners. Anything considered unfit for

Turkish eyes was blocked out with thick black bars. In 1860 there appeared the *Terjumani-Ahval*, the first newspaper of a modern movement which we have seen sweep away sultan, caliph, autocracy, Islamic law and a dozen ancient institutions.

The victory of modernism in Turkey has in no small measure been due to the influence of the press. Women are making use of literature extensively in their propaganda, and in Persia at least three papers for the advocacy of women's rights are edited by women. Probably over ninety per cent of the Arabic-speaking world are still illiterate, and this fact might give the impression that literature can have little scope in lands where so small a proportion of the people can read, yet the influence of the press is out of all proportion to the literates in a country. The newspaper finds its way into every hamlet and village, and if no one else is available the local sheikh will always read aloud the news of the day, and before sunset the whole village is talking of the latest politics and of the doings of the great world beyond their horizon.

About a hundred Arabic newspapers and journals are published in Egypt: in Syria and Palestine about sixty-five. The Moslem press issues magazines and journals of one sort or another in Paris, London, Leningrad, New York, and of course in every corner of Islamic lands.

The press is the main channel for furthering throughout the world the revival of Islam that we have seen in Arabia and elsewhere. The advocates of pan-Islamism are seeking to reunite the broken fragments of the sultan's policy, and literature is being disseminated everywhere appealing to Moslems to stir themselves and to reunite in a new Islamic brotherhood that will demonstrate to the West the solidarity of Islam. From the press there are sounding forth two calls. The one comes from Turkey, where the cry is "Onward and forward, nationalism and patriotism before Islamic solidarity." The other voice comes from Arabia with the appeal, "Back to the Koran, back to the

Prophet," and in these two cries we detect again the old conflict that has sundered Islam from the days of the Prophet.

The Shiah schism in Persia, the Abbaside modernism of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Baghdad, Averhoes in Spain and many others have fought down the ages for liberty and freedom of thought. Their successors are to be found in Turkey, Egypt, India and in fact in most Moslem lands where, through the influence of a foreign power in control, a wide measure of liberty has been secured. The reactionaries have always opposed modern tendencies and have lived upon the joys of heresy hunting. The stereotyped Islam of Arabia knows no compromise, sanctions no liberty outside the covers of the Koran, recognizes no law that is not Islamic, allows for no research or learning that is not based upon the Prophet's teaching, sanctions no new customs that are not within the historical traditions of the faith, brooks no opposition and stamps upon all that is not purely Islamic as an accursed thing.

In 1925 Sheikh Abdal Razik was tried before the Superior Council of the Azhar University for heresy in a book that he published entitled *Islam and the Principles of Government*. "In this book the sheikh propounds the theory that the Moslem code is intended solely as a guide to personal conduct, and not for incorporation in the statutes of the state. The author goes on to discuss current Islamic questions from an advanced point of view hitherto unknown in Egypt. His statements aroused the intense opposition of the orthodox Moslem divines, particularly the declaration that the caliphate was never an essential and indispensable Islamic institution. Anger was also aroused by the sheikh's condemnation of polygamy and his severe criticism of Egyptian women."¹ The remarkable thing in this trial was its ineffectiveness. The agitation fell flat and many of the newspapers of the day heartily supported the sheikh, and hailed him as a champion of freedom of thought.

¹ *The Times*, 6th August 1925.

The leaders of orthodoxy persuaded the Grand Mufti (the head of Islam in Egypt) to issue a decree which, it was hoped, would check some of the innovations. A movement to imitate Turkey in the wearing of hats instead of the fez was forbidden on the ground that "the wearing of European hats is against the Moslem religion, which forbids the faithful to imitate the infidel. The intermarriages which take place are not authorized or justified by any text of the Koran, which on the other hand authorizes the marriage of a Moslem with a female Christian or Jewess because it regards men as superior legally and socially to women, who owe them obedience and whose children must follow the husband's faith."¹ The decree ends with an earnest appeal to all Moslems to resist new ideas which "tend to injure the Prophet's law."

Moslems are being called back to the old paths, and where a government is purely Moslem there is no more liberty of thought now than there was a thousand years ago. These two contradictory forces have always existed within the House of Islam, and Islam has progressed or declined as one or other gained the ascendancy. To-day the reactionaries are faced with new factors unknown in the old days. The press can never be completely muzzled, thought penetrates silently and unseen into the most safely guarded regions, and consequently the days of conservative fanaticism are numbered.

Holy wars are becoming a thing of the past, the swarming periods of the Arab races seem to be over, the practice of polygamy is disappearing under new economic conditions, slavery is admitted by many Moslems to be wrong, and compulsory conversion and the application of the law of apostasy are becoming increasingly unpopular in many areas. Moslems are therefore seeking a new orientation, and many are adapting their faith to the changed conditions and even declaring that the new type of Islam is the true type, and the new interpretation of Koranic teaching is

¹ *The Times*, 25th March 1926.

the orthodox view. But sooner or later they always come up against the impregnable rock of an infallible, mechanically inspired and inerrant Koran. So the struggle goes on.

The present renaissance may mean great changes in Islam itself, but it is more than probable that the two types will exist for a long time side by side. Supporters of the caliphate movement are already speaking of a democratic caliph who would act as guided by a league of Moslem nations, and pan-Islamism is copying to-day the methods of Geneva rather than those of Abdul Hamid. The fact is that Islam, proudly conscious of its achievements and self-sufficient, has never hitherto taken seriously into account the racial differences of Moslem lands. Through the new nationality movements race consciousness has come to the top, and it is quite distinct from the Islamic consciousness that took no account of race and exalted only the faith as suitable in its one form for all.

The problem becomes intriguing when we remember that western thought has penetrated into every Moslem land, and in the most reactionary places there are signs of stirring and unrest. Islam as a whole and everywhere is convinced that all is not well with the faith. The railway has opened the minds of the most fanatical to the power of the West in invention and science. Everywhere most strenuous efforts are being put forward to recreate an Islamic class consciousness, and the glory of Islam is being painted in vivid colours in the hope of checking the process of disintegration that has set in. The question is, has Islam the vitality still to stand the shock of western impacts and retain its old faith, undermined as it is by modern thought? The revival in Islam at present is of a conservative type and is largely a reaction from the modern movements; but the revival of thought and life in some Moslem countries is not this at all. It is the revival of a national consciousness which is not necessarily Islamic. In our study of the Moslem world we must distinguish clearly between these

two revivals : the one is to save Islam, and the other is to regenerate a country debilitated by Islamic law.

It is not surprising in the post-war days of unrest that Bolshevism should have made determined efforts to capture Islam. Propaganda was carried on in most, if not all, Moslem lands. Groups of men were found in most large centres advocating soviet rule, and Islam was assailed by a non-religious force that claimed to have in it a greater brotherhood than Islam itself. Bolshevism, however, underestimated the strength of religious convictions even among the most indifferent. Moslems from childhood have been brought up in the belief in one supreme God, and although political disturbances occurred in places and were probably due to Bolshevich influence, yet Moslem people of many lands were unmoved by soviet appeals, and to-day it is fairly clear that Russia has failed in the Moslem world. Islam has proved a bulwark against which Russia has battered almost in vain.

In this conflict the full torrent sweeps most strongly where the youth of the Moslem world congregate. The waves of new ideas break upon the youth of Islam with dramatic effect. A body of young students in Egypt who were studying Islamic law demanded that they should be allowed to wear European dress. This was forbidden and they were refused admittance to the college unless dressed in the usual Arab robes. Not to be outdone they presented themselves next day correctly dressed in eastern costumes, but on entering the class-room they threw off their robes and took their places attired in full European dress.

These young men were orthodox students of Islam and not the product of a western school. Nationalism acts like a ferment in the minds of these youths. In the nationalist demonstrations in Egypt, it was the school-boys who headed processions, called upon the prime minister and members of the Egyptian cabinet, presented petitions to the leaders, and shouted most loudly for complete independence. Schoolboy strikes were a common

occurrence; the movement was very largely a youth campaign for the freedom of their country. To prove to the world that they were not working on old Islamic lines young Moslems addressed political meetings in churches, and young Copts spoke in mosques. A common flag was used to demonstrate their national solidarity, on which the Cross and the Crescent both appeared.

President Wilson gave form to the hazy ideas of independence, and in each country the one cry was national unity. In Egypt it was "Egypt for the Egyptians," in Turkey, "Turkey for the Turks," and in India, "India for the Indians." In such ideals of national unity cherished by the youth of Islam there is common ground on which Moslems of all types can unite. While a young Egyptian will condemn Mustapha Kemal for his anti-caliphate policy he will be the first to shout (and as loudly as any Turk) for his independence. The Arab will launch bitter attacks upon Moslems of other lands as corrupt and idolatrous and will in his puritan zeal anathematize Persia, Egypt and Turkey alike; yet he is the first to demand self-government for the Arab race throughout the Near East. And at last in Arabia after centuries of simple tribal law an Arab national consciousness is developing which is giving a new unity to the Arab world.

A traveller to-day who visited North Africa, Morocco, Tripoli or Egypt, Palestine or Mesopotamia, India or China, would find wherever he went the younger generation all speaking the same language of national unity, education, progress, reform. Such an enthusiasm is infectious, and the fellah tills his land with new dreams of a citizen's rights, the sheikh studies his Koran in the light of modern movements, and the schoolboy studies his lessons fired with the ambition of a new national consciousness. Religion is being separated from politics for the first time in the history of Islam. Mohammed's idea of a Holy Moslem Empire on theocratic lines is disappearing, and religion is frequently spoken of now as a matter for the individual

conscience only, and not a subject for state legislation and control.

Moslem students of these signs of the times often come to widely different conclusions. Thus in a Colombo Moslem paper we read :

The Islamic world seems to be on the threshold of a great renaissance. Under the impact of western civilization the East is slowly awakening to a consciousness of its own soul.

while from Woking, England, we are told :

There has been many a dark hour in the history of Islam but never any so dark as at present. We, the present-day Moslems, have indeed fallen on evil days. Our past glory has forsaken us. Our might, our honour have deserted us.

To those who see in the past the golden age, present-day tendencies are disquieting, but to hot impetuous youth the golden age lies in the future and is not necessarily modelled on any past glory.

Much has been said and written of the position of women in Moslem lands. While it is true that Mohammedan law differs in different countries, and while it would be obviously unfair to blame the Prophet for all the law which his followers have developed, it is none the less true that we can only judge Islam by its fruits. The renaissance in the Islamic world to-day is by no means simply political. It is a social and religious movement that is affecting the whole fabric of Islam. Moslem womanhood is awakening at last and is in revolt against many Moslem customs and practices. Here is a summary of the canons of Kabyle law in North Africa :

A Kabyle woman has no right to inherit.

She has no right to own property, save the clothes on her back.

She has no right of choice. Marriage may be forced

upon her even with the use of violence by the male who has authority over her.

She has no right to repudiate her husband and cannot under any circumstances or for any reason ask for divorce in the court of justice.

The husband may repudiate his wife whenever he pleases.

No complaint on the part of the wife is allowed.

If a married man dies, his wife is considered part of his inheritance and she is handed on with it.¹

No social renaissance was possible as long as the status of women remained as it was, as long as divorce was merely a question of the whim of a husband, while polygamy was the legal and recognized practice, and while women were almost entirely illiterate and subject for life to the guardianship of man.

In the Near East the first stirrings came through the demand for women's education. Turkey, as we have seen, made this a part of the programme of the new republic, and when education was made compulsory by law, a clause was inserted which included girls as well as boys. Turkish women are demanding a liberal and thoroughly up-to-date education. To a teachers' association which met in Angora in 1924 Constantinople alone sent a thousand delegates, a fact which tells its own story of the growth of education. Co-education has been adopted in the colleges, and women students now graduate in science, literature and law. The medical school has a good proportion of women students.

The growth of education among girls has introduced into Islam a new spirit of social service, and with emancipation on the part of some there has come a desire to help the poor and illiterate. In May 1914 the princesses of Egypt headed a movement for social improvement of the poor, and an

¹ A summary of chap. iv., vol. ii. of *Kabylia*, by General Harroteau and Monsieur Letourneau, councillor in the Court of Appeal of Algeria. Quoted in *Thamilla*, by Ferdinand Duchene, from the English translation by I. Hay and E. H. Newton, pp. 9, 10.

association was formed called "The Association of Egyptian Women for Social and Intellectual Improvement." After the Great War other societies were formed, such as "The New Women," "The Young Women's Club," and "The Feminist Movement." Magazines were published in connection with these societies to advocate through the press the rights of women. Every member of the clubs took an oath to dedicate herself to the cause of virtue, patriotism and service. Even in conservative Baghdad the influence of these feminist movements is being felt; a women's club has been started there, and a troop of Girl Guides formed. A Baghdad daily paper denounces this kind of thing as out of harmony "with traditions of good breeding of our women." So the battle is waged backward and forward; the traditionalists are shocked at the break away from age-long customs, but every month seems to mark new progress in women's affairs. The veil, once the rule for all Moslem women, is now rapidly disappearing, and in Constantinople seven-eighths of the women have entirely discarded it.

While the great mass of women are untouched by these movements at present, it is of interest to note what is the programme of the reforming women. The Egyptian Feminist Union for Woman Suffrage drew up nine points as the aims of the union, and later on they presented them to the prime minister of Egypt for inclusion in the new constitution. They include the following far-reaching ideals:

Social equality with men.

Equal educational facilities in the higher schools with boys.

Reforms in marriage customs and the laws regarding marriage.

The raising of the age at which marriage can be performed.

Propaganda on public hygiene against immorality, evil customs, superstitions.

The Egyptian parliament has already had under consideration the question of equality of the sexes, education, marriage reforms, hygiene and sanitation, and the problem of immorality.

Some lands have scarcely been touched by these changes, but the spirit of reform is penetrating to the utmost frontiers of Islam, and where legislation is introduced the effect is felt by the whole community, and not only by those who are actively working for reform.

We may over-emphasize the disintegration of Islam if we study only the influence of the West upon Moslem life. We may exaggerate Arab Moslem strength if we judge twentieth-century conditions by events of the seventh century, but we cannot over-estimate the importance of the Moslem world finding common ground in a new patriotism which is setting out to withstand and overthrow western domination. The Moslem world is learning western ways not because it loves the West, but only because it sees in westernism the one way of counteracting the domination of Europe over Moslem lands. Thus with nationalism among youth there is growing stronger and stronger a deep distrust of the West and a determination to live their own lives, not only socially freed from the traditions of the past, but also unfettered by all western control.

Mr Felix Valyi echoes the voice of young nationalists in their attitude to the West when he says :

With the object of ensuring the greater comfort of the white race two-thirds of humanity have been reduced to economic slavery.¹

The Moslem world is demanding vociferously what it terms "the legitimate rights of man, the laws of nations on a basis of equality of treatment."²

This race antagonism is not one of many problems, it is rapidly becoming in the Moslem world *the* problem. We have noticed the cleavage between Turkey and the rest of

¹ Felix Valyi, *Revolution in Islam*, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Islam on account of Turkey's anti-Moslem legislation ; but the startling fact remains that, however divided Turkey may be from Cairo or Aligarh in matters of religion, the whole Moslem world is ready to unite with Turkey in a common struggle against the aggressions of the West. Europe is accused of a policy of plunder, and not without some cause. Events since the war have convinced Islam that Europe does not play the game. The Arab kingdom from Damascus to the Hedjaz has not materialized. The Druses, goaded by the misrule of French officers, have revolted ; and a situation that at one time was capable of solution has embittered still further the relations between Islam and Europe. Abd-el-Krim's war in Morocco was significant in that he succeeded in holding at bay two European powers for so long a period.

The Balfour Declaration in Palestine and the division of Syria and Palestine between France and England gives the Arab the impression that these two countries are exploiting their land for European ends. For these and other causes the Moslem world has decided that Europe is inimical to its best interests. The youth of Islam to-day is thinking in terms of politics more than religion. He is often far more interested in his nation's welfare than in the spread of Islam. The solidarity of Islam is not a question of caliphate, or the sheriah (religious law), but almost entirely a matter of political unity in the face of the West.

Europe has created these movements by its educational systems and example. Young Moslems have learned from Europe the lessons of democracy, self-determination, independence and liberty. The break-up of Moslem isolation and the disintegration of the old Moslem life is Europe's responsibility, and the solution of the problem created in the past fifty years does not lie in any policy of repression, but in a frank acknowledgment by both Islam and Europe of the interdependence of the one and the other.

Mohammed is reputed to have said, "Whoever sees, sees to his own profit ; whoever is blind is so at his own

expense,"¹ and this aptly sums up the situation. Moslems for centuries have been blind to the events of the outside world, the progress of civilization and the developments of science; but to-day their eyes are open and, with all the zeal of the newly converted, they are knocking at the doors of Europe and are demanding a place in the councils of the nations.

In the turmoil of change and revolution it is clear that the future of the Moslem world depends upon Europe's attitude to it. If the present feeling of hostility develops a clash some day is inevitable. New moral and spiritual forces must be brought into operation that will draw together the sundered races and unite those at present divided into opposite camps. The nationality movements in Islam have arisen because young Moslems have drawn practical conclusions from the education they have received in Europe; however Islam may view Turkey's present policy, there is no doubt that Turkey has been the greatest political impulse to fundamental reforms and changes since the days of Mohammed and the best example of nationality to Islam, faced with a powerful group of nations controlling these lands.

Reforms will go on, for Islam has ceased to stagnate; Islam may be recast, but as long as the present antagonism continues Islam will continue with a growing political solidarity in opposition to Europe. The present revolutionary process will continue—what is Europe doing to meet the situation?

From what has been said it is clear that the impact of the West on Islam has started a process of secularization. Dogma gives place to national slogans, Mecca is passed by in favour of a visit to Europe, traditions are lost in the rapid strides of a new outlook, laws of the Koran are wiped out by modern legislation, and the Moslem world, under the cloak of an old faith, is marching towards its destiny. Will it be the break-up of Islam as a system or the con-

¹ Quoted in *Revolution in Islam*, by Felix Valyi, p. 17.

solidation of Mohammedanism on new and untried lines ? The reader must decide for himself. On judging, let us remember that there is a universalism in Islam that is not necessarily bound up in conservative dogma. In the Moslem world, "neither birth nor colour has prevented men from reaching the very highest positions" ; and Islam has offered to all races which have accepted the faith equal chances and opportunities. It has shown amazing vitality even in its darkest days ; and to-day Islam educated, awake and modern, holds in its hands the key to the Asiatic question.

In summing up the many aspects of the Moslem situation as seen in different races and countries we come back to the spiritual factor. We have already seen how mere formalism in religion has never met the needs of Moslems, and how they have sought along the lines of mysticism to find comfort for their devotional life. In the early days of Islam it was apparent that the cold dogma of the desert could not alone meet the need, and Sufism sprang up to lead hungry souls along the paths of spiritual experience. The mystic way was adopted by Dervishes in every land and the cult of Ali flourished at a time when materialism and secularization were strongest. The days of the Abbaside dynasty were days of liberal thought, agnosticism in religion and a breaking-away from orthodox traditions, and yet in this period mysticism flourished and grew. The heart of man never has settled down to mere secularism : the husks of an old faith may be retained for a time but sooner or later men seek something more satisfying. A leading professor of the Azhar University in Cairo was asked what gave him greatest hope for Islam and he replied, "I see no hope ; materialism is overwhelming us." But the professor was judging the situation rather by his own standards of orthodoxy than by the psychology of man. Every age in Islam has shown a quest for God, and if history is any guide the present age will not rest either in a militant nationalism or in the materialism of the West.

Omar Khayyam, the Persian poet of the twelfth century, wrote :

We are but chessmen who to move are fain
Just as the great chess player doth ordain ;
He moves us on life's chess-board to and fro,
And then in Death's box shuts us up again—

a sentiment, cynical and hopeless, which made life a matter of irresistible decrees. On another occasion he advocates the doctrine of " Eat, drink and be merry," in these words :

We make the wine jar's lip our place of prayer,
And drink in lessons of true manhood there,
And pass our lives in tavern, if perchance
The time misspent in mosques we may repair.

And in the same age in the same country Al Ghazali was teaching the mystic way to God, leading men to find strength in spontaneous prayer. " At the conclusion of your formal prayers," he says, " offer your humble petitions and thanksgiving and expect an answer."

The period in Islamic history that bred sceptics and reared agnostics also produced the greatest saints of Mohammedanism. These spiritual influences have by no means gone. Mysticism still has a great hold on Islam, and while many are breaking away from the old moorings others are seeking for God in the quiet of contemplation, prayer and meditation. The Dervish movement is a power to be reckoned with in Islam because of its immense hold on the poorer classes, and it may well be that having shattered the old mould the Moslem world in its present fluid state will turn again to a new mould in which mysticism will play a large part.

The elements which we have considered are an orthodox faith, maintained in Arabia from the seventh century down to the twentieth, a mysticism which exercises still a great influence on the spiritual life and thought of the people, and a liberalism which began in the days of Baghdad, was

crushed for a time, and is now in complete ascendancy over the minds of educated Moslems. All these elements will count in the future of Islam. Each one has made its contribution in the past and each one holds a recognized place in the Moslem world to-day. Islam is not a unity and never has been. Its solidarity, once based on a great empire, is being rebuilt on new lines of nationalism. Its faith, once entrenched behind the solid ramparts of Islamic law and government, is in the crucible to-day.

"Islam reformed is no longer Islam." We see now that reforms are sweeping through Islam with gale force, that customs, rooted in the very teaching of Mohammed, are being thrown to the winds, that new legislation is discarding Koranic law for a civil code on western lines, and with it all we see Islam still not "something else." In the present turmoil it is difficult to disentangle the threads. While there are aspects of these changes common to most Moslem countries, yet each land is expressing itself in its own national and racial manner. Disintegration in Turkey may be leading to a future of secularism where religion is practically agnostic, but even there this is very doubtful. The majority of Turks are simple, semi-illiterate people, who are still devoutly attached to Islam. Changes in other lands like Egypt may mean a new orientation of Islamic theology, new liberty of thought, but Egypt to-day is at heart as much Moslem as before. So in each country—while many are unsettled, thinking in new terms and seeking for knowledge in or outside Islam, yet there is coming a fresh impulse to Islam itself: like a phoenix, it rises out of the fires of a modern furnace into fresh activity, new hopes, and a determination not only to hold its own and remain Islam, but also to spread the faith, newly interpreted, the world over.

There are many parallels which might be drawn between the renaissance in Europe in the fifteenth century and the present aspects of Islamic revival. The awakening of learning in the Middle Ages led to the Reformation.

Following hard in the wake of literature and art, culture and civilization, came a renewal of personal religion, a quickened conscience and new moral standards for men and nations. As we watch Islam to-day, athirst for knowledge, awakened to a new culture, demanding a wider learning, and reaching out to a truer civilization, we ask to what is it all leading? Will history repeat itself, and will there come out of the present awakening new ethical standards, a new morality, and a new living faith?

The interest in some quarters in the message of Christianity leads some to the conclusion that Islam, having seen past failures and having sought reform along Islamic lines, will only find the path of real moral progress in the Christian conception of civilization. This may be so, but for the present we see Islam actively engaged in strengthening its stakes and carrying on a widespread propaganda which aims at the overthrow of Christianity by an Islamic unitarianism in the West and a progressive Islam in the East.

CHAPTER XIII

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIANITY and Islam have met at many points down the centuries since Mohammed first called upon the Christian world to accept his faith as a religion that superseded all others. But nowhere is the effect of Moslem invasion seen more tragically than in the old Cathedral of Santa Sophia in Constantinople. One hundred and eighty feet from the ground and surmounting the great dome of the basilica stands the Crescent, the symbol of Islamic faith and power. It has replaced the Cross which had stood there for many years as the sign of the Christian faith. After the fall of the city in 1458 the church was turned into a mosque and efforts were made to obliterate all traces of Christianity. The Byzantine architecture could not be altered nor could the history of the past be forgotten, but sentences from the Koran were inscribed in bold letters in the mosque, a Moslem pulpit was erected and a niche was placed marking the direction of Mecca, to enable the worshippers to pray facing towards Arabia. At the east end of the cathedral there had been a great figure in rich and shining mosaic of Christ, with hands outstretched in blessing. The Turks had sought to hide it by painting over the figure a Moslem arabesque. For a thousand years the figure has been there, but it has been hidden since the fifteenth century. In course of time the arabesque has worn off, and to-day the picture of our Saviour can again be seen. It is half concealed, yet is still the same arresting figure of the Son of God who with outstretched arms is seeking to bless the world.

We transfer the scene from Constantinople to Damascus,

where another church has become a mosque. Here Theodosius I (A.D. 379-395) erected the Church of S. John the Baptist. When the Moslems captured the city and turned half of the church into a mosque there was a Greek inscription, probably dating from the time of Theodosius, cut deep into the stonework of the outside of the eastern wall. It reads, "Thy Kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting Kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." The Arab conqueror left this prophecy in stone, a silent witness in days of disaster to an imperishable faith. At the beginning of the eighth century the interior of the mosque was pulled out and a magnificent building erected by the Omayyads. Twelve hundred Greek artists are said to have been employed in its decoration, and the mosque became famous as the most glorious edifice in the Islamic world. But in all these changes the outer walls were untouched, and the old Christian inscription remained unaltered. In the eleventh century the mosque was burnt down, and when it was rebuilt the inscription was found to have been uninjured and still remained to testify to the everlasting kingdom of Christ. In the fourteenth century Timur pillaged and damaged the mosque, but the writing on the wall was untouched. Near to the inscription the Moslems have erected a minaret which is called "The Minaret of Jesus," and it may be a coincidence that a Mohammedan tradition says that it is here that Jesus will take His place at the Last Judgment.

These two mosques, the one with the two words in bold Arabic characters, God—Mohammed, facing the worshippers as they bow in the Moslem prayers, and the other with the message of Christ's kingdom, are symbols of two faiths, two ideals and two prophets. They represent Islam, glorying in the greatness of God and Mohammedanism as the final revelation to men, and Christianity, which sees in the message of Christ a kingdom of undying splendour and fadeless glory which shall never pass away.

Ever since the days of Mohammed there has been ceaseless rivalry between the two religions. Both claim to be universal, both are missionary in aim and purpose, both have a book believed by each to be the inspired word of God; both owe their foundation to the teaching of men who sought to interpret God to the world, both have their roots deep in the Jewish faith, both stand for an exclusiveness which denies to other religions equality of status, both aim at an inclusive policy which would make their faith the one remedy for the whole world. For thirteen hundred years the clash of these two creeds has constantly reverberated. Holy wars have been waged by Islam, and Christian churches have been blotted out. Crusades have gone to the Near East, and by barbarism and cruelty have stained the banner of the Cross. Both religions emerge to-day from mediævalism and feudalism into the twentieth century of science and civilization, and both are bidding for the heart of mankind. Islam by her conquests and expansion once challenged the Christian Church. Islam is to-day challenged herself by that same Church, which has spread over the globe in a world-wide missionary campaign.

We have seen how Islam in its early expansion owed much to the help and support given to it by Christian communities. Arab Christians on the borders of Arabia found racial sentiment stronger than loyalty to Byzantine rule, and they did not see in Islam a rival faith but an ally against oppressive rulers. The Moslems never aimed at a compromise with other faiths. Their message of the unity of God made them men of one purpose, and so while they gladly accepted any help which the Christians offered them they made every effort to win the Christians over to Islam. For long periods the members of the two faiths lived peaceably together. Those who refused to become Moslems had to pay a tax, otherwise they were not seriously molested. Conversion was not as a rule forced upon Christians at the point of the sword, but there were

at times fanatical outbursts when it spelt death to refuse the demands of Islam. In the days of the early caliphs there is no doubt that the Christians preferred Arab rule to that of Constantinople. Many too, disgusted with the formalism and corruption within the Church, went over to Islam. When the Moslem armies reached the Jordan valley the Christians wrote to them, saying :

“ O Muslims, we prefer you to the Byzantines, though they are of our faith, because you keep better faith with us and are more merciful to us and refrain from doing us injustice.”

This attitude is typical of many areas invaded by Mohammedans. Support was certainly given to Islam by Copts in Egypt, by Nestorians in Mesopotamia, by the Christians in Eastern Europe and by the slave classes in Spain. So deep was the hatred of the Byzantine rule that town after town opened its gates to the Arabs and made terms with them ; in fact Heraclius would probably never have been driven out of Syria, certainly not so easily, had not the people of the country revolted and gone over to the Arab cause.

When Abu Bakr and Omar had passed away and the Moslems began to consolidate their position under more settled conditions, the situation changed. The methods of tribal rule and the freedom of Arab life were not introduced into conquered lands. The people were made to feel that they were a subject race, that for men to be anything but Moslems was to be placed in an inferior position from which there was no escape except by adopting Islam. Wherever the Arab armies penetrated there always followed the religious leaders and teachers of the faith. To them the subject races owed much of the fanaticism shown against them. They were the interpreters of the Koran and they looked with scorn upon all who did not obey God and His prophet.

New laws were at times passed which were all designed to weaken Christianity. No new monasteries or churches

were allowed to be built; those that fell into disrepair were not to be restored. Christian houses had to be open to Moslem travellers at all times and food and lodging had to be provided for any Moslem for three nights. Christians were ordered to teach the Koran to their children and to refrain from teaching their faith to Moslems. They were forbidden to imitate Moslem dress or expression of speech. No cross was allowed on a church, and no Christian processions were permitted through the streets.

It is impossible to form any idea of the rate at which Islam took over Christians to their faith, but in the early centuries very large numbers must have become Moslems. It must not be imagined, however, that Christians did nothing to stem the tide. The writings of John of Damascus bear eloquent testimony to an effort then made to preserve the Christian faith. John was a great theologian of the Greek Church and at the Umayyad court he held high office. It speaks eloquently for the tolerance of the Umayyad caliphs that a Christian could not only be a favourite at court but at the same time could write polemical treatises against Islam and in defence of Christianity. At the same court the poet laureate was one Akhtal, who was also a Christian. Greek and Christian thought was exercising a profound influence upon the Moslem mind. Arab Islam had been launched into the world without a philosophy and acute minds among the Mohammedans sought to work out a philosophy which, while retaining the outward form of Islam, would conform to the problems of life. In this study the clash with Christianity was intellectual and friendly.

The noble character of Saladin in the Crusades and the misrule of the Crusaders led many Christians of the Near East to prefer Moslem rule to that of their co-religionists, and after the victories of Saladin Islam made great progress and the Church was further weakened. The remarkable thing is that when Christianity from the West,

through the Crusades, entered Palestine, Islam met this new element and without any sort of compulsion won over to Islam actual Crusaders themselves. During the first Crusade a body of Germans and Lombards abandoned their faith and embraced Islam. Nor was this the only incident, for in the second Crusade more than three thousand Crusaders became Moslems. The story is told by the private chaplain to Louis VII, who followed his master in the Crusade. The point he stresses is the cruelty of the Greeks to their fellow-Christians of the Latin faith. This, combined with the kind and generous treatment of the Saracens, won over this large body of men to Islam.¹

In all these centuries of Moslem rule the Church that probably gave fewer converts to Islam than any other was the Armenian, and it is the Church that has in consequence suffered most. The Armenian nation fought bravely for its independence, and when it was overcome by overwhelming odds clung with wonderful fidelity to the Christian faith. Some certainly have become Moslems, but it has been under the heavy pressure of terrible persecutions, and the Armenians as a people have remained faithful up to the present day.

In Egypt Islam spread rapidly owing to the appalling lack of teaching by the Church. The spiritual and moral training of the people was neglected, the priesthood was ignorant and corrupt and religion became a formal affair of rites and ceremonies. In some parts of the Delta of Egypt the Christians were so completely neglected and denied the spiritual ministrations of the Church that practically the whole population became Moslem. As Arabic gradually supplanted Coptic and became the spoken language of the people, the Church steadily refused to face the facts of a new situation. Generations grew up with no knowledge of Coptic and still the services were conducted in a language which was unintelligible to

¹ See *The Preaching of Islam*, by T. W. Arnold, p. 88.

most of the worshippers. Persecution no doubt played a considerable part at times in the conversion of Egypt; but force was never the primary cause of the loss of millions of Christians to Islam in that country. Since the British occupation in 1882 there has been complete freedom of conscience, and yet, every year since, some hundreds of Copts have become Moslems. The cause of Islamic progress in Egypt must be sought not so much in Moslem fanaticism as in the weakened and debilitated spiritual state of the Church. After all the differing causes have been considered, the fact remains that the Christian Church in Egypt had not sufficient religious and spiritual vitality to enable it to withstand the shock of Islam. To-day there is a population in Egypt of about twelve million, of whom eleven million are Moslems and one million Christians. The drift towards Islam is still going on and is likely to continue, for a Church that refuses all reforms cannot hope to keep the whole-hearted allegiance of its people.

Moslem penetration into Abyssinia was later in date than into most of the other Christian countries. Although only the Red Sea divided it from Arabia, it was not until about A.D. 1300 that an organized attempt was made to conquer the country. The method adopted was similar to that in West Africa: a Moslem visited Abyssinia, called upon the people to repent and become Moham-medans, and on their refusal he gathered an army and attacked the ruler of Amhara. Islam established itself along the coast, but never succeeded in a permanent conquest of the country. In fact Moslem settlers in Abyssinia became tributaries to the Christian king. In spite of the fact that Christianity was, in this case, the dominant religion it could not hold its own against Islamic propaganda, and numbers of Christians embraced Islam. The causes for this are to be found in the isolated condition of the Church. Cut off as it was from outside help and out of touch with the Church in other lands, it became dead

and formal, its priests lazy and indolent and its people ignorant of the simplest truths of the Christian faith. This trek towards Islam has by no means ceased and in the last century it is estimated that upwards of two hundred thousand Christians in Abyssinia have become Moslems.

We have already seen the effect of Islam upon the Church in North Africa and Spain, and we now turn to eastern Europe. Here the Moslems were as vigorous in their propaganda as the Christian Church was apathetic and indifferent. Many of the clergy were ignorant men of little or no education. Moral life was at a low ebb and a dry rot seemed to have eaten into the foundations of the Church. By the seventeenth century large numbers of Albanians had for one cause or another forsaken the Church for Islam, and in one diocese we read that only two thousand Christians were left. The spread of Islam can be imagined from the fact that during the century from 1600 to 1700 a Christian body numbering ninety per cent of the population had been reduced to less than fifty per cent. Christian women freely married Mohammedans and their sons were always brought up as Moslems. *The unpopularity of the clergy was largely responsible for this decline. Education was almost non-existent and the people knew little or nothing of the Christian faith.* The quarrel between the Latin and the Greek Churches drove many over to Islam. When Christians of the Greek Church in Servia were given the choice of either receiving Hungarian help at the price of accepting Roman Catholicism or being left to Turkish rule, they accepted a Moslem government rather than betray their own Church. No united effort was made to stem the tide of Islamic advance, and Latin Europe demanded as the reward for help the establishment of the Roman Catholic faith.

In addition to this the Moslems held out tempting inducements to the people to accept Islam. All who became Moslems were allowed to retain their lands and

possessions. It is little wonder therefore that in the Balkan states Islam made considerable progress. When we remember that it was not until the nineteenth century that these Balkan people regained a measure of even semi-independence it is remarkable that so many of them remained true to the Christian faith.

Here we may well pause. The impact upon the Christian Church should make us not only pause but think furiously. What were the vital forces in Islam that made it possible for Moslems to spread their faith in many of the strongholds of Christianity? The strength of Islam lies not in its social and political systems, both of which have frequently broken down and have been altered and changed in different ages to suit the needs of the time, but it lies in the fact that Islam is a religion which has enabled men, by a simple scheme of theology, to live religious lives. No religion could maintain its hold upon millions of people, as Islam does, were it not able to meet some human needs. *Islam in proclaiming the unity and greatness of God was putting forth an idea that grew in the minds of men into a profound conviction. The simplicity of it appealed to them as an immense relief from the complexity of mediæval Christian teaching with its priestly offices, saint worship and its labyrinth of theological difficulties; it won its way in polytheistic lands, such as Africa, by its very insistence that there is but one God. Moslems have never tired of reiterating that God is one, God is great and He is a God of judgment. These truths are not peculiar to Islam, for a Christian can subscribe to them all, but they represent the essence of all Moslem teaching about God. Much in Moslem theology is purely theoretical and its interest is confined to students of Koranic law, but the thought of God as the one governor of the universe, as a personal force in the lives of men, and as one who has direct individual dealings with them, is a fact of life, not a theory. It provides an explanation for many of the problems of life, and those who grasp its*

significance it enables to face loss, suffering, trouble and adversity with complete resignation. The omnipotence of God, magnified in Islam, seems at first sight to make the Deity remote and inaccessible, yet it is this very omnipotence which brings God near, "for man is every way surrounded by, nay, himself exists through the immediate working of Allah's will and power, and though their conviction of the absolute difference between Allah's nature and attributes and their own logically leads to complete agnosticism, they find ways through which there is given them a knowledge of Allah and the unseen world—the way of revelation through His prophet and His book." ¹

Travellers in Moslem lands have picked up such words as *kismet* and have become familiar with the daily Moslem expressions, "If God will" and "Praise be to God." It is commonly said that these are but a habit and in no sense an act of conscious faith. It is doubtful how long such a habit would continue if all conviction were lost. A closer study of Moslem life shows that such phrases are not used as an Englishmen might say "By Jove." In the latter case it *is* habit, and the phrase, beyond being an expression of surprise, has no meaning for the person using it. In the former case a Moslem will say "If God wills," glib as it may often sound, from the profound conviction that God is and that His will rules over all.

In estimating the strength of this doctrine of God it should not be forgotten that it was this same message that lay behind the whole Israelitish conception of God. Mohammed had seized hold of a great truth, one acknowledged by the whole Jewish and Christian world. By making it not one of many doctrines but the basic fact in all true religion the Prophet gave men a reality in religion for which they were waiting. God was real, however deistic the Koran might make Him to appear, and men, tired of the insincere formalism of much in the religious

¹ W. H. T. Gairdner in *Vital Forces of Christianity and Islam*, p. 18.

life around them, turned to Islam because it brought God into their lives.

Let us try to imagine the life of a town in Syria with a corrupt government and the hypocrisy of a declining Byzantine empire in which religion was part of the recognized ritual of an immoral court. Then let us watch the sudden appearance of a bold, rugged people coming up out of the desert, preaching that the God who is one is just and is coming to judge mankind. It was like the rediscovery of God to a tired world. The sincerity and conviction of the Arab swept away the hollow shams that so many had seen in religion and they eagerly followed the Prophet because they were in touch with reality. As time went on men in non-Arab lands began to give their own content to the creed "There is no God but God," and men found they could not live simply upon a great conviction and a burning enthusiasm. Arabia had not so much interpreted God to the world as declared the great fact that God is. The Arabs, having shouted the existence of God over half the world, retired once more to their desert and other men took up their cry and began its interpretation for their own races and people.

In the light of later history Arabia never seems to have been able to do more than declaim, God is Great. It was the one message that the Arabs had to give, and it fell to other races to interpret and explain, to expand the content of this desert creed and adapt it to meet their needs. But the strength of the whole Moslem position lies in the fact that the Arabs proclaimed a truth which lies at the basis of religious thought in most lands to-day. The word "great" as applied to God has come to mean, not only what Mohammed had in mind, but all that every man in his own religious experience has been able to conceive it to mean. There were endless possibilities in a creed which simply said, There is no God but God; and men of non-Arab types have seen in it, with a growing

spiritual insight, depths of beauty and glory beyond anything that an Arab brain could imagine.

The reality of God demanded spiritual experience, based upon prayer. Mohammed had given set forms of worship and laid down rules and regulations for prayers to be said five times a day. The greatness of the truth preached demanded something more than recognition as a duty. If God is real the whole soul must go out to Him, and while the mystics observed as a duty the prescribed hours of prayer they found their inspiration in the contemplation of God and His attributes through types of worship not found anywhere in the Koran. The Sufis, by the introduction of this new element into Islam, gave a spiritual significance to what must ere long have become merely formal and stereotyped. In fact they contributed what has ever since been one of the great vital forces in Islam, the quest of God along the lines of spiritual experience. In trying to estimate the sources of power in Islam it should be noted that the truth of God's unity coupled with the fact of His omnipotence, coming as it did as a great inspiration, aroused in the minds of Moslems not only enthusiasm and fervour but a sense of devotion. It purified the religious consciousness and led the more sincere into a life where religion became a matter of emotion and of the heart as well as of the head. In other words the intellectual grasp of the doctrine of the unity of God never sufficed to meet men's needs, nor have the best types of Moslems ever been content with the formal repetition of a creed. The mystics taught Mohammedans to search for an experience of God that was personal, vital and real.

It is in the study of this aspect of Islam that we begin to understand why Islam not only made converts but held them, why in days when there was no compulsion or pressure Moslems spread their faith and won people from many races, of differing religions and of widely varying outlooks. They sought to make the unity of

God a reality in the experience of men. They met Christianity at a time when men were dominated by a priestcraft which appeared to many to deny the right of direct access to God. If a man were burdened with sins he had to repair to a priest for absolution. Islam came preaching that God was accessible to all. He required no saintly intercessors, and the humblest might approach Him and seek His mercy.

Mention has already been made of the *zikr* or the service in Islam for the remembrance of God. The importance of such an act of worship to those who had been newly converted cannot be over-estimated. If any of my readers doubts this let him sit down quietly and repeat to himself the name of God, let him fill his mind with thoughts of God's attributes, His love, His mercy, His power, His majesty until the whole mind is absorbed with the thought of God, and he will soon grasp the significance to Islam of Dervish prayers. These services with their dances and eccentricities have often been a source of evil and the onlooker is wont to scoff at the whole Dervish system as absurd. The frenzy of its devotees and the hypnotic influence it exercises are reasons why it is not a recognized feature of orthodox Islam. The sheikh and religious leaders often openly laugh at it, but these men are the unemotional students of the Koran to whom the letter of the law is more important than life. The Dervish exercises find expression among people with a sense of deep religious need, and to them feeling and emotion play a bigger part in their spiritual life than an intellectually correct creed.

In trying to sum up the reasons for the expansion of Islam I would place next in order the devotion and loyalty to the Prophet universally shown by Moslems of every race. In an earlier chapter we tried to disentangle the man Mohammed, as he is to be seen historically in the seventh century, from the idealization of his personality. When Ayesha was asked about the Prophet she said :

He was a man just such as yourselves. He laughed often and smiled much. He would mend his clothes and cobble his shoes. He used to help me in my household duties, but what he did oftenest was to sew. He never took revenge excepting where the honour of God was concerned. When angry with any person he would say, "What hath taken such a man that he should soil his forehead in the mud?"

This is the picture of a very human man who by his personality won the affection of the Arabs. Armies advanced to battle under the inspiration of a man who had taught them a great truth about God, who had been prepared to suffer persecution for his faith, and who as one of themselves understood their needs, aspirations and hopes. Things that seem to us to-day as glaring inconsistencies in the character of a religious leader did not appeal to the Arabs in the same way. The things Mohammed did that repel many now were so much a part of the normal life of an Arab that they enhanced rather than detracted from his reputation.

In course of time, and as other races without an Arab background came to study the character of this man, a process began of idealizing him so as to secure to the Prophet personally the world-wide significance that had been given to his message. To illustrate what I mean let me compare Ayesha's simple description of Mohammed with a modern writer's estimate of the same man :

Space here debars me from describing the various sides of the character of the Holy Prophet. History fails to point out any other personality than him where we find the assemblage of all the virtues that constituted an evolved humanity. His simplicity, his humanity, his generosity, his frugality, his broadmindedness, his forbearance, his earnestness of purpose, his steadfastness, his firmness in adversity, his meekness in power, his humility in greatness, his anxious care for animals, his passionate love for children, his bravery and courage, his

magnanimity, his unbending sense of justice. Volumes are needed to do justice to this Superman¹

Dr Crawford writes on this subject :

Writers vie with one another in the extravagant phraseology with which they set forth the personal charms and perfections of the prophet's physical and moral being, the adoration of heavenly beings for his person and the marvellous response of all physical nature to his advent on earth are favourite themes. They have even advanced to a mystical philosophy of the Prophet's cosmic significance, in which his pre-existence is practically assumed, and the supreme influence in heaven of his intercessory function is set forth with all the florid wealth of oriental imagery.²

This process of apotheosis is due to a popular enthusiasm which appears to have had its origin in the minds of educated converts from Christianity to Islam. Such men, impressed by the striking contrast between the character of Christ and Mohammed, have imported into the faith of Islam all the mystical doctrines of Christianity concerning the person of Christ. In other words Islam has been strengthened by an attempt to make the character of Mohammed approximate as nearly as possible to that of Jesus Christ. Around this idealized personality all the enthusiasm, fervour and devotion in Islam swings. Thus we have not only the burning zeal created through the great truth of God's unity, but coupled with it the experimental religious fervour of the mystic way and the idealized Prophet as example, guide, intercessor and friend.

It naturally follows from what has been said that another source of strength in Mohammedanism is the Moslem's pride in his religion. We have seen what this means in pagan African areas where the prayer mat ostentatiously displayed gives the Moslem the opportunity

¹ *The Ideal Prophet*, p. 190.

² *Vital Forces of Christianity and Islam*, p. 137.

of public worship which at the same time is an object-lesson to the onlookers. This is not done from any desire for display or "to be seen by men," but from an entire absence of self-consciousness in prayer and a pride of faith which makes a man never ashamed to own and confess it even when he knows that those watching him are not believers. Enthusiasm is always infectious, and the Christian world met in Islam a body of people wildly enthusiastic for their religion. The ringing note of reality that must have met Christian populations weakened by schism, inert through ignorance and priestly rule, and often exploited by the wealthy few was a challenge to the Church. The struggle between the two faiths was one of vitality, and in pre-Reformation days Islam won practically every time because it stood for personal religion, which was the heritage of all.

To this must be added the fact that the absence of any priesthood in Islam, the entirely voluntary system upon which it worked, and the easily grasped creed all made the process of Islamization simple. Furthermore, while Islam presented God to the world as a tremendous reality it did not make any very severe demands upon the morals of the people. The weaknesses to which human nature is prone were condoned, and a man found that he had a wide scope for indulging himself before his conscience need trouble him very much. If he did overstep the bounds even of Islamic morals, God was merciful, and it was a simple matter to ask for forgiveness. Repentance was made easy, and Christians who became Moslems were freed from the burden of penances and payments which at one time weighed like a millstone round the necks of the people. The whole system of Islam, with its conception of God and its ideal in Mohammed, made zeal for religion quite compatible with a moderately easy morality. The awfulness of sin and the holiness of God, as understood in the New Testament, were unknown quantities in the Moslem religion.

It was the combination of these very different elements that together made the appeal of Islam so successful. To these causes may be added, as an important factor in the consolidation of the Moslem position, the class consciousness which formed a vital bond of union among believers. This unity was not political, for Moslem rulers fought against each other from an early date. But it sprang from a common faith in which all, however varied in type, gloried. Worship was the same for all, and in whatever part of the world a Moslem travelled he found the same prayers in use and the same outward practices of religion. This was accentuated by the co-operative character of much in religious ceremony. Brotherhood was not an organization with rules and regulations but was rather due to an underlying sense of unity in the faith that did transcend the differences of divided sects. The Shiah and the Sunni, the Wahhabi and the Ahmadi may attack one another bitterly, but they all display a common enthusiasm for Islam.

The problem that faced Moslem leaders as their religion spread across Asia and Africa and into Europe was the teaching of the newly converted. Moslems have been among the most illiterate people in the world, judged by European standards. Education, as we know it, has often been non-existent, but what Islam did was to concentrate upon religious instruction. The methods of it may be open to severe criticism, but to realize what it has accomplished one has only to visit any Moslem village in the world. People were left entirely ignorant of science, mathematics, geography and kindred subjects, but they were practically all taught to say their prayers. Education was confined to one book—the Koran. History was limited to Islam and the Prophet, and the text-book for reading and the copies for writing were again the Koran. I have met many thousands of illiterate Moslems but I never came across one who did not know the set prayers and who could not freely quote parts of the Koran. It was

this system of concentrating on religion that made Islam a part of the life of the people. They could not divorce religion from life because life was permeated in every phase of it by Islam. What has gone on down the centuries ever since Mohammed's day is to be seen in any village to-day in the Moslem parts of Africa. I see before me as I write a village with a population of three thousand ; not more than one per cent of the people can read and write. An Azhar sheikh who has memorized the Koran lives among the people. He is one of them. He owns a piece of land like the rest, goes to market, buys and sells, and in his manner of life is little distinguished from the villagers. He runs a small school where he teaches his faith. He leads the prayers in the mosques and his religious influence is unique. No social barriers separate him from his flock, no priestly functions give him prestige. He keeps alive the spirit of Islam, warns the wayward, helps the suffering and cheers on the anxious, and all is done in the most simple and unassuming manner. He is the centre of unity in village life, and Islam thrives as the humblest feels proud of the fact that he is a Moslem. This scheme of securing religious teaching for all lies at the root of Moslem solidarity and strength. Many other reasons no doubt there are, but this one alone has kept the Moslem world true to the principles of Islam and loyal to the Prophet. Had the Christian Church paid more attention to the training of its people, had it been content to do one thing and do it well, the history of the past thousand years would have been very different. Religious teaching has been a bulwark in Islam against which the waves of the outside world have beaten fruitlessly for generations.

Having tried to look at some of the strong points in Islam and having seen it grow in influence, dominate countries and absorb other faiths, we naturally ask why Islam has done so little for the lands it has occupied. While Moslems have maintained their faith undimmed down the centuries they have not progressed in other

ways. Islam has so completely satisfied its followers that they have ever been content with things as they are. Growth in knowledge has not been a Moslem ideal, and while the faith has remained a permanent influence in the lives of men, the old order has remained too. The stagnation we have emphasized in so many ways in this book is as much a part of the system as are all the other factors mentioned. The mental attitude has been that, having Allah and His Prophet, what more does a man require? Having the Koran, the sum total of all wisdom and knowledge, why bother about infidel learning?

What therefore in one direction has been an immense strength is in other ways a serious weakness. Had the West never influenced Moslem lands this inherent weakness would not have mattered seriously. But with all the changes we have noted there has come a new mentality, and men, while still professing to see in Islam all that their forefathers saw, are thinking in different terms. Islam, which once made such an irresistible appeal, is seen to-day at a disadvantage. The light of many cultures and non-Islamic thought is turned upon it, and blemishes that were unnoticed before begin to appear. The Moslem shows a discontent with the existing order and is searching for something new. Arabs on the east coast of Africa frankly admit that Mohammedan law on slavery is inconsistent with the principles of justice. The Behai movement in Persia was a revolt against much in Islamic law, and Turkey's attitude to Islam speaks eloquently of its weakness as a system when it comes in contact with higher forms of civilization than that of Mohammed. Moslems feel the difficulties involved in fatalism and the consequent lack of moral responsibility among those who see every act as decreed by God. The theory of Koranic inspiration and the belief in the book as the uncreated word of God again lead men who are now studying science into a difficult position.

We have watched Islam grow, spread over the world,

attack and overthrow Christianity, and we have traced out the new movements in the Moslem world to-day which are disturbing the orthodox and creating a situation different from anything previously seen in Mohammedanism.

We now turn back for a moment to the Christian Church to see how things fared with it after its losses and disasters through the expansion of Islam. We have noted already that the present situation in the Moslem world has been brought about through the sudden impact of the West upon peoples hitherto isolated, uneducated and self-satisfied. The Christian Church was in a similar position when Islam made its attack upon it. The Middle Ages mark both the limits of Moslem expansion and the awakening of the West. The Renaissance in Europe saw the beginnings of modern science and the application of true scientific methods to the investigation of nature. It was an age of geographical exploration, and through the awakened mind of Europe, far-reaching discoveries were made. The telescope, the mariner's compass, and the use of gunpowder gave men a power previously unknown. In governments it was an age of concentration when Europe was re-grouped into nations. At the same time there sprang up the movements for the defence of the rights of the individual and the demand for liberty of conscience. In literature, the rediscovery of classical manuscripts led to a new study of Greek, and Europe awakened to the power and beauty of modern languages, which in turn created the national literatures of the West. The manufacture of paper and the discovery of the art of printing and engraving made available the treasures and discoveries of the age to all and placed learning upon a democratic basis.

The Renaissance was the emancipation of the reason in a race of men intolerant of control, ready to criticize canons of conduct, enthusiastic of antique liberty, freshly awakened to the sense of beauty and anxious above all things to secure

for themselves free scope in spheres outside the region of authority. Men so vigorous and independent felt the joy of exploration. There was no problem they feared to face, no formula they were not eager to recast according to their new conceptions.¹

Italy, shaking herself free from the conditions of mediæval life, developed both a feeling after nationality and a new civilization. In Germany the desire for education spread with the rapidity of a prairie fire. Within a hundred and fifty years no less than seventeen new universities were founded. Throughout the fifteenth century all the universities were under the influence of the Church, and scholasticism prescribed the curriculum of studies. The outstanding factors that carried the Renaissance into a reformation of both states and Church were the deep discontent with conditions of life in Europe, the social revolts in which peasants sought to break down serfdom, the rapacity of Churchmen in the exaction of tithes and payments for every ministration of the Church, and the demand for reality in religion as opposed to the formalism of the day.

With this brief summary of the Renaissance in Christian Europe there will at once spring to our minds many apparent similarities with present-day movements in the Moslem world. Europe learned, through a new class consciousness, the binding influence of nationality and patriotic sentiment and began to advance along the pathway of democratic rule. In Moslems to-day the ferment of new thought, as we have seen, is finding expression in nationalism. Europe broke away from the fettering influences of church-controlled states and the Christian faith acquired new strength and vitality by the wider liberty it had gained. Moslem countries are moving too in this direction. Turkey has led the way, and church and state have been separated. In this analogy it should, however, be remembered that Islam had its renaissance in

¹ Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, p. 18.

Baghdad and Spain and lost its opportunity through the fear of new learning. Orthodoxy gained the day, and while Islam held its own it ceased to be a force in the cultural life of nations. It surrendered its quest for truth to the demand of an infallible book. The Moslem world, stripped of its intellectual leadership, drifted into the old reactionary ways again, while the Christian West struggled through all the throes of a new birth and emerged into a larger life and a reformation of religion which saved Europe. The last great bid of the Moslems for the conquest of the West coincided with the Reformation. When Luther was at the Diet of Worms Islam was seeking to break through Vienna into Germany. While England was seeking to purify its Church a Moslem army was laying India waste. The Reformation came when Sulieman the Magnificent ruled a Moslem empire, extending from Baghdad to Hungary. Both Christianity and Islam were at the cross-roads. Both religions had passed through a renaissance which had brought out clearly in East and West the demands for liberty of thought and freedom of conscience as the basic condition of vitality and growth in religion. Ecclesiastical authorities in Europe tried to stifle the movement which insisted that men should think for themselves whether their thoughts were in accord with the dogma of the day or not. Moslem leaders in the East adopted the same policy. There was this difference, however, that while liberal thought won the day in Europe it suffered an overwhelming disaster in the Moslem world.

A comparison between Christianity and Islam shows that, while both began with remarkable vigour and both spread rapidly, both declined through schisms. The early split in Islam between the Sunnis and the Shiahhs was no less serious to Mohammedanism than the disruption of the eastern and western Churches was to Christendom. Neither religion preserved intact the ideals of solidarity and unity. Again, we have seen how both came ultimately to the great crisis in their affairs through an insistent

demand for individual independence of thought. Down to the Reformation in Europe we see many points in common between the two religions. It is a boast of Islam that it has no priesthood, but the religious leaders have often exercised as absolute a sway over the consciences and thought of Moslems as any Pope did over his Christian flock. Heresy was hunted down in Islam by a persecuting priestly class of sheikhs which has its counterpart in the Inquisition. At the cross-roads the two faiths adopted widely different paths. The one clung tenaciously to its past and the other enriched its heritage by a new tolerance and liberty.

In each case it was a momentous choice ; and in studying these two great faiths we ask why the choice was so made, in the one case of reaction and intolerance and in the other of liberty and life. Each religion had a sacred book. It was and is still the standard of the faith for each. In a great crisis the issue depends not upon past triumphs nor upon a superimposed authority, but upon the teaching of the book and the principles upon which the faith in a last analysis rests. Judged by this standard the causes for the decline of Islam and the new expansion and growth of Christianity are apparent. Primitive Islam was based on force. Its early growth was due to military conquests. Its founder was not only a prophet to his followers but a great general and a military genius. Christianity had for its Founder One who said, " Love your enemies," and who went to the Cross rather than use force in the defence of His faith. Man becomes assimilated to the character that he worships ; and the sharply contrasting ideals of the two faiths—a victorious commander of armies in Islam, and the suffering Prince of Peace—are deciding their destinies. " He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword," said Jesus Christ, and Islam as an intellectual and moral power has perished through the example of its founder. It is true that Christians have failed terribly to live up to the ideal of

their Founder, but the ideal has none the less been the purifying influence that has enabled the Church to grow in moral and spiritual power.

Mohammed, by his theory of a mechanical inspiration for his messages and his book, was really adopting the Jewish system against which Christ protested. Islam was born in an atmosphere which shut out the fresh breezes of heaven and allowed no open windows for fresh air to blow through the stale atmosphere of an enclosed mind and a defined and rigid system. Christ opposed this very system in the Pharisees and the rulers of the day, and His followers were cast out of the synagogue and excommunicated because of their freedom of thought.

Christianity was therefore established upon the principles of liberty of thought and conscience. While it is true that as Christianity became organized it lost the breadth of outlook of its Founder and the true spirit of the faith, yet when the crisis came the principles of Christ were rediscovered and a new era began. The two faiths have influenced the world by the content of their messages rather than by their organizations and accretions.

In tracing out the fortunes of Islam we come back finally to the present day and we see the Moslem world once more passing through a renaissance—this time not due to ancient scholarship but to a modern interpretation of life. In the Middle Ages Islamic revival was the work of a few brilliant thinkers, to-day it is a movement of the people. Then it was a revival of letters and learning, often of a purely academic nature. Now it is an awakening of the populace. It was caliphs then who were patrons of art and literature, now it is the student class that is leading a democratic campaign towards freedom. The changes in Islam to-day find their parallel not so much in the renaissance of Baghdad as in the revival of learning in Europe. Can the comparison be carried a stage further? Will Islam, out of its political and educational changes, evolve a moral reformation in religion? There

are not wanting signs that this may be so. The awakened conscience on social matters in the Near East is significant. The desire among Moslems to repudiate slavery, polygamy, the harem, the veil, and the demands for an equality of status between men and women, points to something deeper than the political changes that are taking place. The efforts at social reforms and the willingness of educated Moslems to engage in social service speak of a growing consciousness among them of deeper needs than self-determination.

In these days when the Moslem mind is plastic and people are seeking for a new way of life, has Christianity a message for Islam ?

A common argument to-day by Mohammedans is that Mohammed gave a practical and attainable ideal, one suited to the requirements of frail human nature. Exactly ! But such an ideal easily reached makes future progress impossible, and Moslems satisfied with the sanction of four wives have accepted the standards of polygamy as their ideal for womanhood. A nation's growth depends upon its mothers, and in Islam, where woman is distrusted, hedged round by restrictive customs of the veil and the harem and relegated to an inferior position, the people have lost in moral stamina and character. Christian races of the West have undoubtedly failed to realize the lofty idealism of Christ in regard to women, and the divorce courts' proceedings are used by Moslems as useful propaganda to expose the failure of Christianity. But the remedy does not lie in lowering the standards as Islam does, but in the application of Christ's teaching to modern life. The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount which enforces monogamy and forbids divorce is an ideal universal in application, and however far off its attainment may seem, it ever bids the Christian forces onward in spiritual progress and moral growth.

The blood feuds of Arabia have never ceased through the teaching of Mohammed and exist to-day exactly as

when the Prophet found assassination a convenient method of ridding himself of a troublesome enemy. The lack of idealism in Islam has left Arabia where it was and tribal wars continue as before. This in all fairness should be contrasted with the spread of Christianity in, say, central Africa, where blood feuds and tribal wars were the common practice prior to the entry of Christian missionaries. With the entrance of Christianity the tribes ceased their conflicts, the chiefs voluntarily abolished slavery, and pagan customs ceased to exist. Why? Because the teaching of Christ made these things impossible. Why then did they not cease in Arabia? Because it must be admitted that the Prophet and the Koran sanctioned them, and much of the evil habits of Arabia was countenanced by the example of the Prophet.

In saying this let it not be forgotten that the failure of Christianity in the Moslem world has been due to the poor expression of our faith by so-called Christian nations. Here are some of the arguments used by Moslems of India against the Church :

1. "Christianity reconciles its gospel of salvation with self-aggrandizement and greed. Christian nations are usually the strongest and they have used their power to rob and exploit the non-Christian nations."
2. "Christian ideals are too vague and impracticable to be of use."
3. "Christianity with its belief in force (the Crusaders), bloodshed and torture (the Inquisition), and its consigning to perdition all those who cannot think of the Trinity in a particular way (Athanasian Creed), cannot be the religion of a God of mercy and love."
4. "Mohammed uplifted woman to a position of perfect equality with man. The Christian Church lowered her status by holding her responsible for the fall of

man from paradise and as the origin of all sin on the earth, and hence a thing to be despised."

5. "The failure of Christianity as a religion is shown in European countries, and especially England, by empty churches, lack of ordination candidates, the prevalence of divorce, immorality of art, etc. We are not likely to give up Islam for a religion which produces such results."¹

A good deal in these arguments is to be discounted as for purely propaganda purposes. For example, the editors of *The Light* know perfectly well that the Koran (chap. 2, v. 28) speaks of the fall of Adam and Eve, and that the subject is dealt with also in the Koran, chap. 7, v. 18-24. The Christian Church, however, is challenged to show what Christianity has to offer that a Moslem cannot find in Islam. The word Christian (or Nasrani, as it is in Arabic) has been a strong term of reproach in Moslem lands, amounting almost to a curse, and Moslems, as the quotations above show, confuse western civilization with Christianity. The two are not the same thing, any more than because most Moslem lands are illiterate and backward Islam and illiteracy are the same thing. The argument too about the relative position of women in Moslem and Christian countries is disproved by facts. But the problem remains, Has Christianity a message for Islam? And if so, How ought it to be presented?

History shows that the two bodies have understood one another best when they have frankly confessed that each has something to contribute to the other. Mutual respect, toleration and goodwill lie at the basis of a better understanding. Islam will make no headway by the absurdly bitter attacks upon the Christian faith, in which it indulges so freely at Woking and other centres to-day. Christianity will gain nothing by abuse of Mohammedanism for its failures. In both the Omayyad and the Abbaside

¹ These arguments are taken from *The Light*, published in Lahore.

periods Christians were invited to state their case for Christianity at court, and the free interchange of ideas led to a mutual understanding. The Christian line of approach to Islam must be one of respect, not of superiority. It must be through an honest desire to see the Moslem point of view and to clear away misunderstanding on both sides that the approach should be made. Moslems have much to teach us.

The insistence upon the unity of God is common ground. It was the rock upon which Israel stood, it has been the strength of Islam, and it is none the less the glory of the Christian faith. The desire for spiritual experience is again common to both faiths, and the Christian approach to Moslems should be that of brothers in co-operation in a quest for God.

The world to-day is demanding reality in religion, and no correctness of Christian creed can take the place of the power that interprets God in practical terms of reality to men. Moslems have appreciated far more than they would admit the immense service rendered by Christian missions, and the self-sacrificing devotion of doctors, nurses and educationists has opened the way for happier relations between the followers of the two religions. Most missionaries will agree that the old method of controversy is wrong and has proved fruitless. What the Moslem asks is to see the life of Christ exemplified in His followers, the faith that worketh not by argument but by love, and the life that expresses a Divine compassion for a suffering world. The preaching of the Cross has too often been polemical and has thus proved only a stumbling-block to the Moslem. The Cross in Christian experience means that God shares in the sorrows and ills of the world: "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." Christianity must show God entering into the needs of humanity and suffering with men, or fail. Islam has lost immeasurably through an entire absence of Fatherhood in its conception of God. The fact that leading Moslems to-day

are beginning to speak of God as Father shows their conscious need of the revelation brought to man through Jesus Christ. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" is the answer to a Moslem's fatalistic belief in Divine despotism.

The Christian faith is a life to be lived, and the reason why Moslems are so often repelled is because it has never been adequately tried by any large body of people or nations. We cannot attack the faults of others when we are so conscious of our own failures, but we can seek to show by love and service what Jesus Christ taught and what His ideals, if applied, would mean in world regeneration.

In an age of publicity and the press, the two religions stand out in the clear light of day. History reveals the strength and weaknesses of each. The successes and failures are recorded for all to read, and above all stand the characters of Christ and Mohammed.

The grand idea of Christ's mission, as Bushnell has so ably put it, was "to re-create the human race and restore it to God in the unity of a spiritual Kingdom." Jesus alone, the simple Galilean carpenter, never having seen a map of the world in His whole life nor heard the name of half the great nations of it, undertakes a scheme far vaster and more difficult than that of Alexander, Cæsar, or Mohammed. He expounds His plan with a courage and confidence in the world's future far transcending any other human example. His method is different from any previously accepted standard. He begins with the poor, the outcast, and the sinful and brings them into sympathetic touch with the all-embracing love of God. He lives for those who can offer no hope of reward or return, and His life is one of selfless service for the good of humanity. He was of no school or party, though he permeated all by His influence. His teaching is not so much a doctrine as a biography, a personal power, a love which walked the earth and expressed itself in fellowship with

men. The more the Man Christ Jesus is understood the clearer it becomes that here, and here only, is the centre of world unity in which all nations can combine. Here is the one ideal for the whole human race.

Christianity has often failed, Christians have frequently misrepresented the Prince of Peace, the Church has at its best been a poor representative of its Master; and yet in spite of all, and we do not wish to minimize the weaknesses of Christian life and character, the fact remains that Christ has been the inspiration of all that is best and noblest in life. Hospitals and philanthropic work to-day owe their conception to the ideals of the Son of Man. The efforts for the uplift of man, such as the abolition of slavery and the large measure of brotherhood attained in the world, are due to Him. Every minute of every hour of the day records some act of kindness, some deed of love, some service that is unselfish that would never have been done had not Christ come to show us the meaning of life. When therefore the Moslem world challenges us to show what Christianity has to offer we point with all confidence to Christ, the Hope of the world—to Him who said, with a wealth of sympathetic understanding hitherto unknown: "Come unto ME all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

APPENDIX

(See page 19)

As these statements about Mohammed's character have been challenged by modern Moslem writers in England, a few instances are appended with reference to authorities.

1. 'ASMA, daughter of Marwan of the Banu Aus tribe. 'Asma was a poetess who after the battle of Badr wrote some verses to warn her people of the folly of trusting this upstart (Mohammed) who had taken the sword against his own people and had slain many of their chiefs. She was brutally murdered by 'Umair of the same tribe, and the next morning at prayers Mohammed asked him whether he had accomplished the deed. 'Umair stated that he had and that he was rather afraid of the consequences. Mohammed set his mind at ease by saying that a couple of goats would not knock their heads together over it, and calling together the people in the mosque he said, "If ye desire to see a man that hath assisted the Lord and His prophet look ye here," pointing to 'Umair.

(See Muir's *Life of Mohammed*, chap. xiii., p. 232, and for Moslem sources, *Ibn Sa'd II*, 1-18; *Ibn Hisham* (edition Wüstenfeld), pp. 995-996; Wellhausen's *Wakidi*, pp. 90-91.)

2. THE ASSASSINATION of Abu 'Afak.—"Many weeks did not elapse before another murder was committed by express authority of Mohammed. The victim was an aged Jewish proselyte, Abu 'Afak, whose offence was similar to that of 'Asma. He, too, had composed some stinging verses which annoyed the Musulmans. 'Who will rid me of this pestilent fellow?' said Mohammed to

those about him, and not long after a [Moslem] convert from the same tribe, falling upon the aged man as he slept in the courtyard outside his house, despatched him with his sword."

(Sir William Muir in his *Life of Mohammed*, p. 233. This story is confirmed by Moslem authorities, *Ibn Sa'd II*, i. 19; *Ibn Hisham*, 994-998, and Wellhausen's *Wakidi*, pp. 91-92.)

3. ASSASSINATION of Ka'b, son of Ashraf (A.D. 624).—Mohammed prayed aloud, "O Lord, deliver me from the son of Ashraf in whatever way it seemeth good unto Thee because of his open sedition and his verses." Mohammed, son of Maslama, replied, "I will slay him," and Mohammed signified his approval. A gang of assassins was formed and Mohammed said, "Go, the blessing of God be with you, and assistance from on high." When the assassins returned, Mohammed met them at the gate of the mosque, saying, "Welcome, for your countenances beam of victory." "And thine also, O Prophet," they exclaimed, as they cast the ghastly head of their victim at his feet. Then Mohammed praised God for what had been done.

(See Muir's *Life of Mohammed*, chap. xiii., pp. 239-240, and for Moslem sources, *Tabari I*, 1368; *Ibn Hisham*, 548; Wellhausen's *Wakidi*, p. 95; *Ibn Sa'd II*, 1-21.)

4. MURDER of Ibn Sunaina.—Mushaisa the murderer, when reproved by his brother, replied, "By the Lord, if he that commanded me to kill him had commanded me to kill thee also, I would have done it." "What," Huwaisa cried, "wouldst thou have slain thine own brother at Mohammed's bidding?" "Even so," answered the fanatic.

(See Muir's *Life of Mohammed*, chap. xiii., pp. 241-242, and for Moslem sources, *Tabari I*, 1372; *Ibn Hisham*, 553; Wellhausen's *Wakidi*, p. 97.)

5. ASSASSINATION of Abu'l-Hukaik (called also Abu Rafi).—Mohammed sent a chosen party of five, giving them a command to make away with Abu'l-Hukaik. On their return they recounted to him all that had happened, and as each one claimed the honour of the deed, Mohammed examined their weapons, and from the marks on the sword of Abdullah ibn Unais, assigned to him the merit of the fatal blow.

(See Muir's *Life of Mohammed*, chap. xviii., p. 337, and for Moslem sources, *Ibn Sa'd II*, i. 66; *Tabari I*, 1375; Wellhausen's *Wakidi*, 170; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 351.)

6. RAPE of the Women of the Banu Mustalik at the Wells of Muraisi'.

(*Ecce Homo Arabicus*, p. 8. Arabic sources: *Halabi*, ii. 296; L. Caetani, *Annali dell' Islam*, i. 601; *Wakidi*, 179; all the Tradition Books.)

7. MASSACRE of Banu Kuraiza.—The Jewish Army having been brought to the last stage of starvation offered to surrender on condition that their fate should be decided by their allies the Banu Aus. These were urgent to the Prophet that their ancient allies should be spared. "Are ye then content," replied Mohammed, "that they be judged by one of yourselves?" They answered "Yes," and Mohammed forthwith nominated Sa'd ibn Mu'adh to be the judge. "Proceed with thy judgment," said the Prophet. Sa'd turned himself to his people, who were still urging mercy upon him, and said, "Will ye, then, bind yourselves by the covenant of God, that whatsoever I shall decide ye will accept?" There was a murmur of assent. "Then," proceeded Sa'd, "my judgment is that the men shall be put to death, the women and children sold into slavery, and the spoil divided among the army." Many a heart quailed, besides the hearts of the wretched prisoners, at this bloody decree. But all questionings were forthwith stopped by Mohammed, who sternly adopted

the verdict as his own, declaring it to be the solemn judgment of the Almighty. "Truly," he said, "the judgment of Sa'd is the judgment of God announced on high from beyond the seventh Heaven." This judgment was carried out to the full, Mohammed himself being a spectator.

(Muir's *Life of Mohammed*, chap. xvii., pp. 305-309, and for Moslem sources, *Ibn Hisham*, pp. 684-690; *Tabari I*, 1485; *Ibn Sa'd II*, i. 53; Wellhausen's *Wakidi*, 210; *Musnad Hanbal V*, i. 55, iii. 207; *Sira* on the margin of *Halabi*, ii. 150.)

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INDEX

- ABBAS EFFENDI**, 120
 Abbaside dynasty, 71-3, 86 *et seq.*, 94-5
 Abd-el-Aziz, 194
 Abdel-Razik, Sheikh Ali, 5, 248
 Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Turkey, 130-3, 199
 Abdullah Ibn Yassin, 170
 Abu Bekr, 50, 52-3, 56, 101-2 (*quoted*), 56
 Abyssinia, 269-70
 Afghanistan, 7
 Africa—
 (*See also under names of countries*)
 Berber conversions, 169-70
 Christian population, 176
 conquests in North, 64, 168-70
 Islam in (*see chap. ix*)
 Islam in South, 174-5
 Moslem education, 178-9
 Moslem population, 176, 180-1
 reasons for spread of Islam, 177-80, 181-2
 Sphinx, 186-7
 Aghar Khan, His Highness the, 156
 Ahmad, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam, 222-5 (*quoted*), 223
 Ahmadiyah sect, 222-5
 Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder, 222-5
 Islamic Review, 225
 Review of Religions, 225-6
 Akbar, 67, 215
 Akhwan, *The*, 202-3
 Ali, 65, 66, 67, 101-2
 Ali, King of Hedjaz, 205
 Al-Ghazali, 115-17, 260 (*quoted*), 115-16
 Aligarh University, 219
 Al Mansour, 86
 Al Moravides, 170-1
 Ameer Ali, Right Honourable, 156
 America, Moslems in, 233-4
 Amr, 58-60, 66, 166
 Angora—
 seat of Turkish republic, 150
 Turkish government set up in, 143-5
 Arabia (*see chap. x*), 8, 10, 73-6, 79-81
 Arab swarming periods, 54-5
 effect of desert on Arab character, 14-15
 Mohammed and, 37-8
 "time of ignorance," 34-6
 Arabic—
 as lingua franca of Moslems, 82-3
 superseded by Turkish in Turkey, 148-9
 Armenia, 133-4, 268
 Arnold, Edwin (*quoted*), 38
 Avempace, 94
 Averrhoes, 93-4
 Avicenna, 94
 Ayesha, 17, 28, 158, 165 (*quoted*), 275-6
 Azhar University, 5, 206-7, 239, 240

 BABISTS, doctrine of, 117-18
 Baghdad, 72-3
 Bedr, Battle of, 25, 41
 Beha'ullah, 118-21 (*quoted*), 119
 Berbers, conversion of, 169-70
 Black Stone of Mecca, 35
 Blunt, Wilfrid (*quoted*), 198-9
 Bolshevism and Islam, 251
 Brévié, M. J. (*quoted*), 185
 Byzantine Empire—
 Islam and, 52-3, 56, 64, 78, 84, 266
 Turkey and, 124, 125-6

 CADESIYA, 61
 Cairo, westernism in, 238-40
 Caliphate, 1, 72, 73, 206-7, 210
 abolition by Turkey, 151-4
 Indian defence of, 131, 156-7
 protests against abolition, 156-7
 Sunnis and Shiahns, 101-2
 transferred to Turkish Sultan, 126
 Camel, Battle of the, 65
 Carlyle, Thomas (*quoted*), 30-1
 China, Islam in, 131, 234-5
 Christianity—
 and Islam (*see chap. xiii*), 101, 175-176, 228-9, 233-4

Christianity—*continued*

- Armenian massacres, 133-4
- in Egypt, 166
- in North Africa, 168-9
- in Nubia, 166-8
- Mohammed and, 36-7, 42-4
- persecution of Christian minorities, 140-2, 163
- Constantinople—
 - captured by Turks, 126
 - Cathedral of Santa Sophia, 263
- Crawford, Dr (*quoted*), 277
- Cromer, Lord (*quoted*), 241
- Crusades, 91, 267-8
- Cyprus, capture by Moslems, 65

DAMASCUS—

- captured by Moslems, 56-7
- Church of St John the Baptist, 264
- headquarters of Omayyad dynasty, 66, 85-6
- railway to Medina, 199
- Dervish orders, 114-15, 131, 160, 235-6
- Divine Comedy*, Islamic influence on Dante's, 89-90
- Druses, 5

EGYPT, 66, 238-44, 268-9

- Arabic-speaking, 82
- conquered by Turkey, 126
- invasion by Amr, 58-9, 166
- nationalism, 5
- Europe, Moslem invasion of, 67-71

FEISUL, KING, 6, 205, 208

- Fez, abolition of, 3-4, 161
- Fodio, Othman dan, 124, 176-7, 185, 197
- Fudhayl Ben Aziz, 113-14
- Fulani tribe, 172-3

GHORI, MOHAMMED, 213-14

- Gorini, Commander G. (*quoted*), 141

HANIFFA, MR (*quoted*), 231

- Haphsa, 80, 165
- Haroun al-Raschid, 72
- Harrison Dr (*quoted*), 16, 201
- Hasan Basri, 112-13
- Hasan, 66
- Hausa tribe, 172, 173
- Headley, Lord (*quoted*), 231-2
- Heaven, 39
- Mohammed's nocturnal journey to, 33-4, 89-90
- Hell, Mohammed's belief in, 39

Heraclius, 25, 56

- Hindu-Moslem Alliance, 226
- Holy war (*see* Jihad)
- Hussein, 66, 67
- Hussein, Dr Taha, 243-4
- Hussein, Mrs R. S. (*quoted*), 29
- Hussein, Sherif of Mecca, 203-4, 208

IBN SAUD, 6, 10, 200 *et seq.*

- Congress of Moslems in Mecca, 207-10

India, 6-7

- Ahmadiyyat sect, 222-5
- Aligarh University, 219
- Hindu influence on Islam in, 218-19
- Hindu-Moslem Alliance, 226
- Hindu-Moslem communal strife, 226-8
- Islam in (*see* chap. xi)
- Moplah rising, 227
- Moslem education, 219
- Moslem Missionary Societies, 220-2
- Moslem population, 217
- objects of present-day Moslem propaganda, 220-2
- Wahhabi influence, 215-16

Indian Review, 227-8*Indian Social Reformer*, 235

Iraq, 6

Islam—

- Arab (*see* chap. x)
- belief in angels, 47-8
- beliefs (*see* chap. xiii), 44-9
- Bolshevism and, 251
- Caliphate (*see* under C)
- Christianity and (*see* under C)
- conception of God, 39, 40-1, 45-7, 97-100
- creed, 45
- derivation of word, 26, 44
- divine origin, 34
- doctrines of heaven and hell, 39
- effect of Arab beliefs, 35
- effect of desert, 15, 16
- fatalism, 46-7
- in Turkey (*see* chap. viii)
- intercession of saints, 193
- Jewish effect on, 36, 42-3
- Jihad, 24-5, 26, 49-50, 136-7, 197, 214, 231
- Koran (*see* under K)
- Mohammed (*see* under M)
- Mysticism (*see* under M)
- Pan-Islam, 131-3
- polygamy, 27-9, 84, 229
- prayer, 11-12, 40, 98-100, 238-9
- reasons for early expansion, 77-9

Islam—continued

- reasons for spread in Africa, 177-80, 181-2
- religious duties, 49-50
- tribal basis, 15
- Wahhabi tenets, 191-5, 202-3
- women in, 28-9, 253-6

Islam and the Principles of Government, 248

Islamic Review, 225
(*quoted*), 230

Jews, Islam and, 24, 36, 42-3

Jihad, 24-5, 26, 49-50, 136-7, 197, 214, 231

KAABA, 35, 83-4, 207

Kasim, Mohammed Ibn, 213

Kemal, Mustapha, 3, 4, 140-4, 148, 150, 151 *et seq.*
first president of Turkish republic, 149

Khalid, 60, 61

Koran, 19, 21-2, 26, 42, 44, 48-9, 79-81, 86-7, 279-81
divine origin, 22, 23, 34, 281

quotations from, 14, 18, 20, 23, 24-5, 26, 33, 42-3, 46, 47, 89, 98, 137, 165, 289

Kurdistan, revolt against Turkey, 161-2

LAHORE, Ahmadiyyat sect at, 225

Lane-Poole, Stanley (*quoted*), 139

Lausanne Conference, 144-5, 163
"Law of Fundamental Organization," 144

Light of Islam, 234

Literature in the Moslem World, 246-7
newspapers, 247

Lull, Raymond, 91-2

MAHDI, doctrine of the, 102-3, 104, 223

Mahmud of Ghazni, 213, 215

Mamun, 86-7

Mandingo tribe, 171-2, 173

Mansour Hallaj, 114

Martel, Charles, 68-70

Mecca, 35-6

Black Stone, 35

Kaaba, 35

Mirza Ali Mohammed, 117-18

Mirza Yahya, 118

Moplah Rising, 227

Mohammed (*see* chap. ii and Appendix), 215

and Bible history, 23, 36, 40, 41-2, 43

and Christianity, 36-7, 42-4, 80-1

and Heraclius, 25

and holy war (jihad), 24-5, 26, 49-50, 137

and Jews, 24, 36, 42-3

and prayer, 40

appearance, 13

Battle of Bedr, 25, 41

belief in Judgment Day, 39, 48-9

character, 13-14, 18-19, 31-2, 275-7

comparison with Jesus Christ, 26-7, 107, 108, 277, 285-6, 287

conception of God, 15-16, 39, 40-1, 45-7, 98, 106

death, 30

denunciation of idolatry, 22-3

flight to Medina, 13

miracles, 22

nocturnal journey to heaven, 33-4, 89-90

prayer, 17

wives, 18, 27-9, 158, 165, 275-6

Muavia, 65, 66

Muir, Sir William (*quoted*), 165, 241

Mysticism (*see* chap. vi), 260

Christian and Islamic, 106-9

Dervish orders, 114-15, 260

Shiah sect, 102-4

Sufism, 104-7, 109-12

NUBIA—

Islamic conquests in, 59-60, 166-8

OMAR, 56, 57-8, 62

Omar Khayyam (*quoted*), 260

Omeyyad dynasty, 66-7, 71-2, 85

Othman, 64-5

PALESTINE, 5, 53, 57-8

Jerusalem captured by Omar, 57-8

Palgrave, W. G. (*quoted*), 97

Pan-Islam, 131-3

Persia, 6

Babists (*see* under *B*)

conquest by Moslems, 60-2

Shiahs (*see* under *S*)

Sufism (*see* under *S*)

Sunnis (*see* under *S*)

Pilgrim railway, 199, 209-10

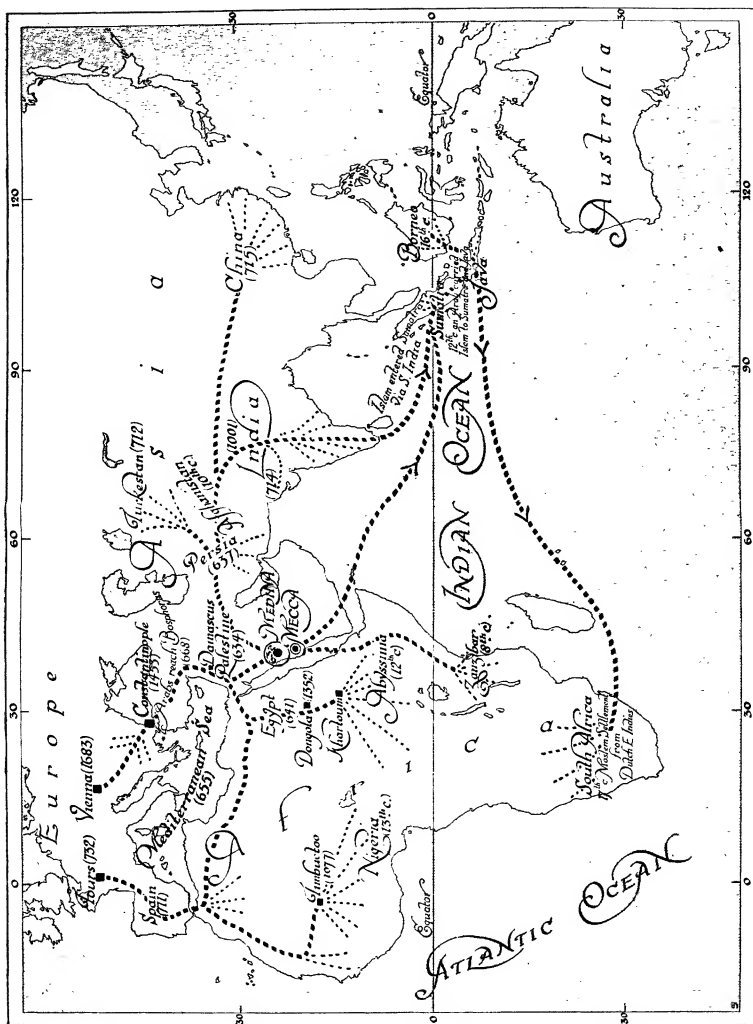
Population—

Moslems and Christians in Africa, 176, 180

Moslems in India, 217

Putney, Ahmadiyyat sect at, 225

- QADIAN**, headquarters of Ahmadiyyat sect, 225
- RABIAH**, 113
Review of Religions, 225
 (quoted), 225-6
 Rifat Effendi (quoted), 160-1
- SAID, SHEIKH** (quoted), 162
 Saoud, Ibn (*see under I*)
 Sayed Ahmad Khan, 219
 Sayed Ahmed, 197, 215-6
 Sayed Jamal-el-Din, 131-2
 Seljuk bin Yakak, 95
 Sennousi, 174, 185, 197
 Shafi, Sir Mohammed (quoted), 227-8
 Shiah, 102-3, 117-18
 Sidi Mohammed Ibn Ali, 174
 Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah (quoted), 209
 interview with Ibn Saoud, 208
 Slave-trade—
 Christian slaves in Turkey, 141-2
 foundation of African, 59-60
 Sobieski, John, King of Poland, 128 (quoted), 128
 Spain, Moslems in, 68-71
 Spender, J. A. (quoted), 3-4
 Sphinx, 186-7
 Sufism, 104-7
 training of a Sufi, 109-12
 Sunnis, 102
 Syria, 5, 53
 Damascus captured by Omar, 56-7
 Druse, 5
 Seat of Omayyad dynasty, 66, 85-6
- TIMBUCTOO**, 173, 174
 Traditions of Islam, 16-17
 Turkey (*see chaps. vii and viii*), 1, 2-4
 Abdul Hamid, Sultan, 130-3, 199
 abolition of fez, 3-4
 abolition of sultanate, 148
 and Armenia, 133-4
 and Great War, 136-9
 Constantinople captured, 126
 declaration of republic, 149-50
 defeat at Vienna, 127-8
 defeated by Russia, 128
 empire losses in 19th century, 128-9
- Turkey—*continued*
 expansion, 124-5
 foundation, 123-4
 government set up at Angora, 143-5
 Lausanne Conference and, 144-5, 163
 "Law of Fundamental Organization," 144
 losses in war, 138-9
 Mustapha Kemal Pasha (*see under K*)
 nationalism, 132-6, 139 *et seq.*
 Othman, 124
 persecutions of Christian minorities, 140-2, 163
 reforms under republic, 157-60
 Sultan deposed, 144
 Turkish language supersedes Arabic, 148-9
 women, 157-9
 Young Turk party, 132-6
- VALYI, FELIX** (quoted), 256
 Vienna, defeat of Turks at, 127-8
- WAHHAB, MOHAMMED IBN ABD-EL**, 191-3
 Wahhabis, 192-8, 199 *et seq.*
Akhwan, The, 202
 and Great War, 203-4
 and Turkey, 195-6
 Ibn Saoud, 200 *et seq.*
 in India, 215-16
- War—
 Turkey in the Great, 136-9
 Wahhabis and, 203-4
 Wells, H. G. (quoted), 26-7, 94
 Wilson, President, 252
 Woking, Ahmadiyyat sect at, 225
 World Congress of Moslems in Cairo, 206-7
- YARMUK**, Battle of, 53
 Yemama, Battle of, 79
 Young Turks, 132 *et seq.*
 Yousif, Sheikh, 175
- ZEID IBN THABIT**, 79-80
 Zikr, 110, 275
 Zun Nun, 114



This map is intended to show the rapid spread of Islam.

The starting point is Medina (Arabia) A.D. 632. The lines running out from Arabia show the march of Moslem forces eastward as far as China, westward as far as France, both points being reached before the first hundred years after the Prophet's death.

The figures given are approximate dates when Islam occupied the various countries.

The two lines running into Europe, terminating at Tours A.D. 732 and Vienna A.D. 1683, mark the end of Islamic expansion in the West.

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